

City of Milford, CT Plan of Conservation & Development

Planning & Zoning Board
City of Milford, Connecticut

PREPARED BY:

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IN ASSOCIATION WITH
WESTCOTT AND MAPES, INC.**

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CITY OF MILFORD, CONNECTICUT
PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT
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1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Since January 2000, the Planning and Zoning Board of the City of Milford has been engaged in the process of updating the City's Plan of Conservation and Development. This update builds upon the previous Plan of Development of 1972 as well as subsequent topical updates. The Planning and Zoning Board structured the Plan Update into four (4) distinct components:

- Conservation and Open Space;
- Housing and Preservation;
- Business/Community Centers; and
- Highway Corridors

The Board chose to focus its efforts in the beginning of the Plan Update process on two of the components, the Conservation and Open Space and the Housing and Preservation Elements of the Plan for two main reasons. First, there is a direct interrelationship between housing development and the City's efforts to preserve remaining open space parcels. As described within the document, Milford has very little land available for development. During the 1990's, a lot of the land which had been vacant, especially in the northern sections of the City, was developed as residential. Secondly, the City had already begun the process of developing a Downtown Plan via a citizen charrette process sponsored by Milford Progress Incorporated. Findings from the Downtown Plan have been incorporated into the Milford Center Element of the Plan Update.

This document contains general background on the plan update process as well as sections on Open Space; Conservation and Housing and Preservation; Business/Community Centers; and Highway Corridors. The document concludes with an overall Land Use Plan and Action Agenda.

The efforts undertaken in the preparation of this Plan Update illustrate the Planning and Zoning Board and the City Administration's desire to have broad community participation in the development of the plan. As a kick off to the process neighborhood outreach and informational meetings were held at several locations throughout the City. The Board also held topical

meetings and created an Advisory Committee comprised of City department heads, representatives from non-profit groups and agencies, and representatives of organizations having particular interest or expertise in specific areas associated with the Plan of Conservation and Development. The Board held two public hearings (February 26, 2001 and April 3, 2001) to hear comments on the Open Space and Housing Elements included in this plan. The Planning Zoning Board held a third public hearing on the full Plan on July 9, 2002.

This broad-based community participation format was intended to give residents and stakeholders of Milford the opportunity to become involved with the formulation of future goals, policies and long range plans for the City. With such involvement it is hoped that the community, boards and commissions and elected officials will “buy into” the final plan and have a clear understanding of the issues, policies and actions set forth in the final Plan of Conservation and Development.

The development of an updated Plan of Conservation and Development and Land Use Plan serves to guide the City’s future development as an advisory or policy-setting document. Key to successful future development is the creation of Zoning and Subdivision regulations, design guidelines and implementation techniques which explicitly outline and enforce the vision for the City set forth in the Plan. Strict enforcement of implementing regulations and adherence to the Plan will be key to achieving the established vision for the future.

LAND USE

As a prerequisite for all planning and analysis as part of the Plan of Conservation and Development Update, a digital base map was prepared in order to use Geographic Information System (GIS) technology. The digital file to create the base map as well as a link to data on a parcel basis contained in the Assessor’s records was provided by the Milford Management Information Systems Department. The data was then revised as appropriate based upon consultation with Planning and Zoning staff, field

research, review of available reports and data and consultation with people in the community.

A basic product of this work is an Existing Land Use Map attached hereto. This map displays the use of every parcel of land in Milford placed into one of 28 land use categories. These categories have been quantified into the total number of parcels and amount of acreage as shown in Table 1. It should be noted that these parcels do not include water bodies or street right-of-ways. Therefore, the total acreage is less than the total acreage within the entire City.

Table 1
Existing Land Use – 2000 (Revised February 2002)

LAND USE	NUMBER OF PARCELS	ACRES*
Agriculture	27	278
Apartment/Condominium	246	422
Automotive Sales/Service	113	139
Bank	14	9
Business Office	184	345
Commercial Recreation	9	24
Extraction/Processing Sand and Gravel	10	157
Golf Course	4	131
Hotel/Motel	13	31
Land Trust	26	114
Landfill	1	40
Manufacturing	154	403
Marine Sales/Service	6	11
Miscellaneous Open Space	278	1,525
Municipal Facilities	246	146
Private Institutions (including cemeteries)	90	209
Public Park	31	690
Rest Home	5	12
Restaurant/Tavern	64	53
Retail Sales/Service (General)	289	417
School	23	264
Single Family	15,245	4,833
State & Federal Facilities	55	155
Three to Five Family	69	22
Trailer Park	3	30
Two Family	478	118
Utilities/Parking Facilities	75	244
Vacant Land	1,380	1,090
Wholesale/Distribution/Heavy Commercial	109	223
Miscellaneous Un-Classified	71	2
TOTAL	19,318	12,139

* Acreage rounded to the nearest full number.

2. OPEN SPACE AND CONSERVATION

BACKGROUND

During the several months of community dialogue in support of the process of updating Milford's Plan of Conservation and Development, it became apparent that the community placed a high value on preserving open space and protecting the natural environment. While specific interests ranging from the protection of trees to the need for active recreation facilities were expressed, the common theme was the importance of open space to the quality of life in Milford. This importance of open space preservation became more apparent as detailed land use analysis was completed. This analysis revealed that Milford is rapidly becoming a mature community with few large tracts of land remaining undeveloped.

An issue related to the diminishing amount of undeveloped land has been the increasing pressure for development of properties containing environmentally sensitive resources including wetlands, waterbodies and natural habitats. These types of parcels were often dismissed as a development site when alternative sites were available. As the alternatives become scarce, the sensitive sites will become the subject of development proposals. While inland wetlands regulations provide some level of protection, the large benefits of preservation of the entire site are often diminished. Also, it becomes difficult to protect natural systems and links between open space areas without a more comprehensive preservation strategy.

While the overall goal of increased open space preservation has support in the community, it is necessary to further define this goal in terms of priorities and specific open space actions. This definition is important since there are not unlimited resources available for preservation activities. This open space plan presents a description of existing conditions, establishes policies and clear definitions and proposes specific actions to implement a long range plan.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

In order to provide a sound foundation for the preparation of the open space plan, a wide range of information was assembled. Much of this information was then mapped utilizing Geographic Information System (GIS) methodology. The inventory includes both natural resource information and land use provided through links to the City's land records. The Natural Resource Features Map shows the location of wetland soils, floodplains, tidal/sand flats and the Coastal Zone Management Area. This will be a very useful map for the analysis of potential priority parcels for open space preservation. Such parcels can provide linkages with existing open space areas as well as protecting important natural habitats. As can be seen from a review of this map, much of the natural resource system in Milford is related to the various waterbodies and Long Island Sound. The Natural Resources Map highlights the location of these waterbodies.

Key to any open space planning effort is an assessment of where a community currently stands in terms of its open space inventory. The Existing Open Space Inventory Map displays the various types of open space in Milford. This open space inventory includes a total of 2,460 acres. Based on the total corporate area of Milford of 24.7 square miles (15,808 acres), this open space inventory represents 15.5% of the total area of the City.

This inventory includes four categories of land use:

- Miscellaneous Open Space
- Milford Land Trust Property
- Public Parks
- Golf Courses

The Miscellaneous Open Space category includes: city, state or federal land; Water Authority land; and semi-public/neighborhood open space. The public park category includes both city and state parks which for the most part contain some active recreation facilities. The golf course category is self-explanatory. The database has been used to calculate the amount of acres comprising each of the open space categories. Table 2 presents these acreages.

Table 2
Open Space Acreage by Category

<u>Category</u>	<u>Acreage</u>
Miscellaneous Open Space	1,525
Milford Land Trust	114
Public Parks	690
Golf Course	<u>131</u>
	2,460

Within these categories, there are several large parcels worthy of mention. For example, the miscellaneous open space category includes the Nells Island/Wheeler Wildlife Area at 640 acres which represents a major component of that category. It should be noted that this 640 acres includes an area as measured by the GIS system and is not parcel specific since part of this area has not been parceled. While this area is not fully accessible to the public due to the extent of tidal marsh, it is an important open space resource for natural habitats. In fact, the State of Connecticut Plan of Conservation and Development shows three (3) existing preserved open space areas in Milford. The three areas are the Nells Island/Wheeler Wildlife Area area, Silver Sands State Park and Baldwin Nature Preserve. Similarly, the public park category has two major facilities, Eisenhower Park at 207 acres and Silver Sands State Park at 290 acres. As can be seen from the Existing Open Space Inventory Map, there are numerous parcels which have been preserved as a result of subdivision approvals. While these parcels tend not to be generally familiar to the community or used by people residing outside the specific subdivision, these areas do provide a habitat for wildlife. It is also interesting to note the extent of small open space parcels which are present along various watercourses. These parcels will be important in the formulation of a greenbelt plan along these watercourses.

To begin to quantify the acreage within the various types of open space, the GIS System which provided a merge of the City Assessor's Data with the parcel base map was utilized. Assumptions as to ownership and current use were utilized to categorize each area into one of the four open space categories. The following table provides a more detailed listing of major open space parcels within the City. Land Trust Parcels, lands within the Public Park category and the conservation areas highlighted in the following

table are considered through their designated use as permanent open space. The Golf Courses, unless specifically restricted by deed, are not considered permanent open space.

**Table 3
Milford Open Space by Use Category**

Golf Course	131 Acres
Great River Golf Course	
Orchards Golf Course	
Milford Land Trust	114 Acres
Miscellaneous Land Trust Properties	
Public Parks	690 Acres
Eisenhower Park	207 Acres
Fowler Field	23 Acres
Silver Sands State Park	290 Acres
Remainder – Small Neighborhood & City Parks	170 Acres
Miscellaneous Open Space	1,525 Acres
Nells Island/Wheeler Wildlife Area	640 Acres
Beaver Brook	55 Acres
Gulf Pond	55 Acres
Old Field	32 Acres
Gulf Beach	17 Acres
Baldwin Swamp	36 Acres
D'Amato Property - Flight 93 Heroes Park	37 Acres
Mondo Ponds Nature Preserve	
& Education Center	149 Acres
Remainder - Subdivision Open Space	504 Acres

Source: GIS - Parcel Area Calculations: Assessor's Database - Ownership and Use

Throughout the Plan of Conservation and Development Update Process the discussion of the need for “dedicated” open space was discussed often. It is recognized that the dedication of Open Space “in perpetuity” is important to ensure continual open space benefit and resource protection. The creation and update of a citywide Open Space Inventory that includes a determination of the tenure of such open space, any restrictions on its use, acreage and unique natural or physical features would facilitate future planning efforts. The inventory will also become a useful tool when planning for open space acquisition. Such an inventory should be one of the first “Action Items” undertaken as part of the implementation of this plan.

As part of the assessment of open space needs, it is important to understand the geographic distribution within a community. For purposes of geographic analysis in Milford, we have divided the community into the five (5) areas used for organization of the neighborhood meetings. These areas as shown on the attached map are Devon/ Walnut Beach, Downtown/ Harbor/Post Road South, Parkway/ Wheelers Farms Road, Post Road North and Woodmont. For each of these areas, a calculation of the amount of open space and public parks has been made. Tables 4 and 5 present these calculations:

Table 4
Open Space¹ by Geographic Area

<u>Area</u>	<u>Number of Parcels</u>	<u>Acreage</u>
Devon/Walnut Beach	72	1,087
Downtown/Harbor/Post Road South	40	108
Parkway/Wheelers Farms Road	89	766
Post Road North	24	140
Woodmont	<u>121</u>	<u>359</u>
	346	2,460

Table 5
Parks² by Geographic Area

<u>Area</u>	<u>Number of Parcels</u>	<u>Acreage</u>
Devon/Walnut Beach	9	345
Downtown/Harbor/Post Road South	4	27
Parkway/Wheelers Farms Road	11	261
Post Road North	2	24
Woodmont	<u>5</u>	<u>33</u>
	31	690

It should be noted that the statistics for the Devon/Walnut Beach area are impacted by two parcels of regional significance. The Nells Island/Wheeler Wildlife Area Center and Silver Sands State Park parcels are both located in this area.

¹ Includes open space, parks, golf courses, land trust.

² Includes public park category only.

Both Tables 4 and 5 reflect this for the Devon/Walnut Beach area. It is also logical that both the Downtown/Harbor/Post Road South and Post Road North areas have the least amount of open space since these are the commercial/industrial areas of the City along the Route 1 and I-95 corridors.

However, it is important to look at natural resource issues in these areas as such relate to open space and to assure that residential sections of these areas have access to open space areas.

OPEN SPACE DEFINITION AND OBJECTIVES

In order to provide background for the establishment of open space objectives and priorities it is important to establish a basic definition of open space. As part of the Plan of Conservation and Development Update, the Mayor's Open Space Advisory Committee presented an open space definition as well as open space objectives in the form of preservation outcomes as listed below.

OPEN SPACE DEFINITION –

Open Space lands are lands deemed worthy of protection from development or its adverse impacts. Such Open Spaces serve one or more of the following functions:

*Open Space Lands shall be defined as lands deemed worthy of protection from development or its adverse impacts. Such lands shall serve one or more of the following functions:
Natural Resource Protection, Outdoor Recreation, Protection of Public Health and Safety, Promotion and Maintenance of Community Character, or Protection of Historic or Archeological Sites.*

- **Natural Resource Protection**, such as habitat protection for plants and animals, streambelt or riparian corridor protection, shorefront protection, or the provision of greenbelt linkages;
- **Outdoor Recreation**, including parks, playgrounds, beaches, and trails for active recreation, and nature preserves for passive recreational uses, serenity and sites that contribute to quiet experiences;
- **Protection of Public Health and Safety**, such as floodplains, inland and tidal wetlands, unbuildable areas or areas with limitations for development including steep slopes, high water table or shallow depth to bedrock;
- **Promotion and Maintenance of Community Character**, such as the development of greenbelts, open space dedication related to development, scenic vistas, and appropriate buffer strips;
- **Protection of Historic or Archaeological Sites**, such as the town green, historic districts and historic structures and grounds.
- **Resources Management**, such as forested lands, farmland and fisheries.

PRESERVATION OUTCOMES - Preservation of land designated as “open space” will promote one or more of the following functional outcomes:

1. Maintain and enhance the conservation of natural or scenic resources and create new opportunities for natural resource protection;
2. Protect natural streams or water supply;
3. Promote conservation of soils, wetlands, beaches, mudflats or tidal marshes;
4. Enhance the value to the public of abutting or neighboring parks, forests, wildlife preserves, natural reservations or sanctuaries, or other open spaces worthy of preservation;
5. Promote the development of a greenbelt corridor by providing a linkage between existing open spaces;
6. Enhance passive recreational opportunities for the general public with access to all citizens on lands adjacent to major waterways;
7. Enhance active recreational opportunities for the general public in organized sporting activities for youth and adults; and
8. Preserve significant historic sites and/or important archaeological sites.

PURPOSES OF OPEN SPACE - Open space lands are to serve one or more of the following general purposes:

1. Conservation, including scenic, wildlife habitat, water supply, soil erosion, and flood control;
2. Recreation, including passive recreational activities (such as walking, jogging, nature appreciation), and active recreational activities (such as ballfields and multi-use playing fields);
3. Education, including organized school and community-related activities that advance citizen knowledge of and appreciation for the natural environment and the plants and animals that inhabit it, as well as an appreciation for the community's cultural heritage;
4. Preservation, protection and nourishment of community character, including historic, archaeological and environmental variety (such as pocket parks and neighborhood breathing spaces).

EXCLUSIONS - The following lands are to be excluded from the classification of, and do not qualify as, Open Space:

1. Lawns in subdivisions that are typically characterized as front yards, side yards, and back yards;
2. Driveways, parking lots, and other lands designed or intended for vehicular travel or parking;
3. Public schools and municipal buildings;
4. Any part of an existing road.

The Milford Zoning Regulations currently contains a definition of usable open space as follows:

The City's Zoning Regulations should be revised to include the functional open space definition included in this plan.

USABLE OPEN SPACE - The portion of the ground space on the same lot and contiguous to the principal building which is either landscaped, or developed and maintained for recreation and conservation purposes. Usable open space shall not include those portions of a lot that are utilized for off-street parking or loading, driveway or building purposes.

Because, this zoning definition is more applicable to the review of the development of a particular parcel of land within the context of the zoning regulations than to the overall determination of open space objectives and priorities the City's Zoning Regulations should be revised to include the functional open space definition included in this plan.

Overall Priorities

A high priority for Open Space Conservation should be placed on those areas containing resources that are unique to Milford or significant or fragile natural resources and deemed worthy of preservation. The City of Milford has deliberately made conservation a high priority in such areas, while promoting appropriate development in areas that do not require protection or preservation.

The focus of open space conservation efforts should be on coastal resources and tributaries, riparian areas and floodplains, other ecologically important areas that contain unique or unusual topographic features and plant and animal life, as well as on the remaining significant agricultural sites.

The Open Space component of this Plan is the result of an analysis of existing conditions and the review of past Open Space Plans and other relevant documents as well as consultation with the community. Consultations included the Mayor's Open Space Advisory Committee, the Conservation Commission, the Environmental Concerns Coalition, the Milford Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency, the Milford Land Conservation Trust and other environmentally oriented organizations. Private citizens and stakeholders were also given the opportunity for input at a variety of public forums and meetings.

Based upon the activities described above it has been concluded that a high priority for Open Space Conservation should be placed on those areas containing resources that are unique to Milford or significant or fragile natural resources and deemed worthy of preservation. The City of Milford has deliberately made conservation a high priority in such areas, while promoting appropriate development in areas that do not require protection or preservation. Specifically, the focus should be on coastal resources and tributaries, riparian areas and floodplains, other ecologically important areas that contain unique or unusual topographic features and plant and animal life, as well as on the remaining significant agricultural sites in the City. These priorities are logical for natural resource protection as well as for the less clearly defined goal of preserving the quality of life attributes of Milford. Open space and natural resources were cited often during the neighborhood meetings and topical workshops as positive attributes and community strengths. A further advantage of this approach is that it offers the opportunity for the conservation of geographically interrelated Open Space systems that will have the highest potential for community impact. In addition to the protection of the lands bordering Milford's waterways, a priority has been placed on open space protection at locations where connections between open space areas can be made to create a network of integrated greenways and greenbelts. For purposes of this plan, "greenways" are associated with walking trails, while "greenbelts" connote lands preserved in their natural state but usually without walking trails or

other types of recreational activities.

An on-going Open Space Inventory, including both public and privately held open space, will be developed and maintained to provide a guide for future development and conservation efforts.

A Natural Resources Inventory which includes a comprehensive listing of notable natural resources in the City should be compiled and updated. Such an inventory could be used by various boards and commissions when reviewing future development and or land acquisition plans.

An on-going Open Space Inventory, including both public and privately held open space, will be developed and maintained to provide a guide for future development and conservation efforts. A Natural Resources Inventory which includes a comprehensive listing of notable natural resources in the City should be compiled and updated. Such an inventory could be used by various boards and commissions when reviewing future development and or land acquisition plans.

For purposes of discussion of potential Open Space Systems within the natural resource protection framework discussed above, a map of Open Space Corridors has been prepared. This map depicts nine (9) regions within the City containing open space attributes worthy of preservation. These regions have been established by the Mayor's Open Space Advisory Committee as part of an ongoing Open Space Inventory. Within each of these regions, the Committee has prepared a list of parcels that have been or are being prioritized for protection through some method of conservation. Placement on the list does not necessarily mean that the parcel is slated for acquisition. An approach such as conservation easement might be more appropriate than purchase.

The general locations and open space objectives for each of the designated regions are described below:

Region #1: Wepawaug River Corridor – North of Route 1. The objective for this region is to protect sections of the Wepawaug River and associated riparian floodplain and transitional upland regions not currently protected. Protection can be accomplished by acquisition, donation or conservation easement. Expanses of floodplain, underlying alluvial soils, and naturally vegetated riparian cover are essential to protect the integrity of the Wepawaug River's functions. Open Space conservation in this region can serve to provide for a continuance of the greenbelt corridor south of Eisenhower Park to I-95 and south of Walnut Street to Route 1. When opportunities arise, consider the application of conservation easements, donations as well as public education for additional corridor protection along the Wepawaug River. Investigate the potential for scenic vistas along the

Route 121 bike route.

Region #2: Wepawaug River Watershed - north Milford, west of the Wepawaug River and south of Route 15 to Baldwin Swamp. The undeveloped portions of this large area currently function as part of an expansive natural greenbelt connecting East Park/Wepawaug River corridor to the east and ultimately to the Housatonic River corridor to the west. Most of the currently existing undeveloped and uncommitted Open Space (e.g. Camp Katoya) is characterized by a high diversity of landforms. For this reason, there is a diversity of vegetation and wildlife, including the potential for threatened and endangered species. These landforms include rocky and wooded uplands containing steep slopes, ridges and outcrops, a variety of hard wood and red maple swamp lowlands of the type typically found in Milford. Protection of unprotected Open Space regions as natural resource preserves will guarantee a continuous greenbelt that would ensure Milford's habitat and species diversity, water and air quality, and an improved quality of life for all of Milford's citizens. In addition, opportunities for acquisition, donations and conservation easements should be pursued to protect the unprotected regions of Guther Brook, a small but important watercourse that extends from Baldwin Swamp to the Wepawaug River.

Region #3: Lower Turkey Hill Brook - a tributary in the Housatonic River watershed, north of Route 15. Encourage preservation of currently unprotected streambelt gaps, primarily lowland mixed hardwood tracts and red maple swamps along the Lower Turkey Hill Brook and its north/south and east/west tributaries with the use of available preservation tools. Westward of these feeder streams, the Lower Turkey Hill Brook forms the southern boundary of the recently acquired municipal open space known as Flight 93 Heroes Park (the former D'Amato property), which is contiguous with the State-owned narrow, steep-sloped, wooded region between the railroad tracts and the Housatonic River south to Route 15. The upland region is the site of numerous protected and unprotected greenbelt spurs of the Housatonic River/Wepawaug River greenbelt corridor. The opportunity to form a contiguous protected watercourse, streambelt buffers, and upland transitional zones is important to the preservation of air and water quality, wildlife habitat and range, and rural atmosphere of the region. Additionally, connection with and extension of the State-proposed Housatonic River/

Route 15 bridge bikeway should be pursued for recreational and alternative transportation use.

Region #4: Housatonic River Corridor – South of Route 15. Most of the Housatonic River waterfront in this region is in private holdings (utilities, industrial, municipal, commercial, and residential), although there are two public boat-launching facilities and a pedestrian conservation easement in this corridor. Should opportunities arise for conservation easements, donations or acquisition of Open Space to augment public riverfront access/vistas or recreational activities, they should be pursued. In addition, coordination of Open Space preservation with the Housatonic Valley Association Greenway Task Force should be examined.

Region #5: Beaverbrook and Housatonic River Watersheds – The Mondo Ponds Nature Preserve, the artesian spring in the Regional Water Authority's MI-7 land unit, the Beaver Brook Marsh and nature trail, and the Milford Reservoir form the central hub of the Beaver Brook Greenbelt. Encourage maintenance as Open Space of the remaining Regional Water Authority holdings in the region and consider their acquisition as City-designated natural resource Open Space, should land be offered for sale. Preservation will protect water and air quality and contiguous vegetative/wildlife habitat associated with this system. Augmentation of pedestrian access/passive recreational walking trails for West Avenue, Naugatuck Avenue, Plains Road, and Erna Street residents and employees of commercial/industrial operations should be pursued. South of Route 1, use available preservation tools to protect sections of Beaver Brook not currently protected. Examine the potential for scenic vistas and walking trails along the Beaver Brook Corridor from Jonathan Law High School south to Naugatuck Avenue.

Region #6: Long Island Sound Beachfront - west of Naugatuck Avenue. Consider acquisition of beachfront parcels contiguous with municipal holdings to create open space or scenic view areas with fishing access for public enjoyment.

Region #7: Indian River Corridor - Protection of currently unprotected Open Space along the Indian River and its tributaries is essential to

maintaining/preserving the ecological, recreational, and educational resources of this region. These resources include:

- sea oyster beds that are commercially cultured;
- the run for anadromous alewives;
- the Long Island Sound nursery;
- the State-designated Gulf Pond Preserve;
- the Milford Marine Institute;
- habitat and range for residential and migratory wildlife; and
- public crabbing, fishing, birding, small boating and pedestrian activities.

The preservation of two remaining large tracts of Open Space that border the Indian River off Wampus Lane (junction of Stubby Plain Brook and the Indian River) and of Roses Mill Road (junction of Karl's Brook and the Indian River) should be pursued. These tracts should be preserved as natural resource preserves having the potential to serve passive recreational and educational functions. Coordinate with the State DEP to increase the alewife run upstream from Clark's Pond through Roses Mill Pond to the Indian River Lake, an important and protective habitat for alewife spawning. Other potential passive recreation areas should be evaluated in the Indian River Corridor. Where opportunities arise, protect additional sections of the Indian River and its tributaries with existing preservation tools, to maintain/preserve water and air quality and natural riparian/upland habitat buffers.

Region #8: South Central Watershed/Calf Pen Meadow Creek Corridor-

Protect the currently unprotected Open Space lands south of New Haven Avenue/Baxter Lane and west of Buckingham Avenue and North of Melba Street. These lands contribute to the Calf Pen Meadow Creek Greenbelt, a small but important corridor that runs north/south and links upland mixed hardwood tracts and thickets, red maple swamps, and other freshwater wetlands to the tidal marsh east of Bayview Beach. These natural resources provide upland habitat for wildlife, provide open space for surrounding neighborhoods, protect air and water quality, and protect freshwater and tidal ecosystems. Additionally, due to the proximity of Calf Pen Meadow and Foran High School, the potential for increased educational

and passive recreational opportunities along selected portions of the corridor should be evaluated. The Open Space preservation objective for this region is to link municipal open space with Milford Conservation Trust holdings and to expand protected Open Space areas, forming a contiguous protected greenbelt.

Region #9: South Central Watershed/Farley Brook/Oyster River Corridor – Located between Farley Brook/Anderson Avenue Bridge and the mouth of the Oyster River. The mouth of the Oyster River is an important natural resource, a State-maintained oyster spawning sanctuary. Opportunities to protect the quality of watercourses, tidal and freshwater marshes, riparian buffers and the transitional uplands should be pursued by purchase, donation and conservation easements. Protection should be concentrated on currently unprotected land located south of Anderson Avenue and along the Oyster River north of Live Oaks Elementary School. Purchase of a parcel north of New Haven Avenue through which Farley Brook flows would contribute to existing municipal/ Milford Conservation Land Trust Open Space protection in this region. Explore the potential for a pedestrian greenway and scenic vista between New Haven Avenue and Anderson Avenue, a historically important site consisting of an abandoned railroad/trolley line located along the eastern edge of Farley Brook Marsh.

GOAL: *Open Space for Natural Resources Preservation*

The City of Milford's goal for Natural Resource Preservation is to continue to protect those Open Space lands containing unique, significant or fragile natural resources and to link these lands, where appropriate, with adjacent and nearby Open Space lands.

In addition to open space protection and preservation, the conservation of agricultural resources in Milford is an essential component of natural resource protection. These agricultural lands provide a uniqueness and link to Milford's past that cannot be replaced if lost.

The City of Milford's goal is to continue to protect those Open Space lands containing unique, significant or fragile natural resources and to link these lands, where appropriate, with adjacent and nearby Open Space lands. Land use tools available for Open Space preservation include, but are not limited to, purchase, donation, conservation easements and transfer or purchase of development rights. The various acquisition mechanisms that can be utilized by the City are included later in this section. Open Space preservation is necessary to protect natural resources and unique landforms.

The State of Connecticut Conservation and Development Policies Plan for Connecticut 1992-1997, p.23, finds that "Environmental Quality is one of Connecticut's strongest assets in attracting and maintaining viable businesses. As the state proceeds in economic development planning, environmental quality must be part of the balance." In Milford, Open Space set aside for natural resource preservation helps to meet the State goal. It also enables the City to maintain its unique New England character. Tracts of wetlands, rocky and forested hillsides, and extensive woodlands still exist in North Milford. Some of these lands are or will be needed as Open Space for maintaining species diversity, as transition zones between wetlands and woodlands, and to provide habitat and "range" for wildlife displaced by development.

With time, these Open Space lands will become increasingly important for natural resource preservation, renovation of air and water quality and for recreational use. Furthermore, their inclusion within an Open Space network will make more of these lands accessible to the public for outdoor active and passive recreational pursuits.

In addition to open space protection and preservation, the conservation of agricultural resources in Milford is an essential component of natural resource protection. These agricultural lands provide a uniqueness and link to Milford's past that cannot be replaced if lost. As shown on the Existing Land Use Map, these agricultural resources are located in northeastern

Milford in the vicinity of the Housatonic River and in eastern Milford in the Woodmont area. Treat's Farm in the Woodmont area is a particularly well-known landmark in the community and creates a unique environment in an area that is otherwise quite densely developed. There is also significant traffic volume in the vicinity of New Haven and Anderson Avenues. The high visibility of this site increases its value as a community asset and as a center of activity within the Borough of Woodmont. The farm on Oronoque Road is a link to the Housatonic Design District. This is an area of Milford that is the last area to be developed and where significant residential development has recently occurred. A preferred approach to preservation of farmland is the purchase of development rights rather than outright purchase. This allows the continued use of farmland for agricultural purposes.

Policies

- ◆ Plan for and actively encourage the creation and preservation of greenways, greenbelts and linkages to ultimately form continuous corridors along the significant waterways that run north-south through Milford: the Housatonic River, the Beaver Brook, the Wepawaug River and the Indian River, in addition to east-west linkages that form interconnected networks. Organizations responsible for this planning include the Mayor's Open Space Advisory Committee, the Conservation Commission, the Milford Land Conservation Trust, the Planning and Zoning Board and the Board of Aldermen.
- ◆ Protect the shorefront adjacent to Long Island Sound from the effects of erosion and storm damage and maintain architectural harmony of the beachfront without disrupting the shorefront view by neighbors and the public. Organizations responsible for this planning include the State DEP, the Harbor Management Commission and the Planning and Zoning Board.
- ◆ Keep informed of the disposition and potential availability of significant Regional Water Authority lands for possible acquisition by the City.

- ◆ Pursue State funding, use the City's Open Space funding mechanism, the State's Recreation and Natural Heritage Program, the Forest Legacy Program, and the cooperation of the Milford Land Conservation Trust and other available programs to acquire key parcels for natural resource preservation and open space linkage. Organizations responsible for planning include the State DEP the Mayor's Open Space Advisory Committee, the Conservation Commission and the Milford Land Conservation Trust.
- ◆ Pursue conservation efforts by the use of deed restrictions, conservation easements and other non-purchase mechanisms of property acquisition.
- ◆ Protect large forested tracts via Open Space dedication, purchase or conservation easement for recreation, renovation of air and water quality and, most importantly, for adequate wildlife habitat currently being lost due to development. Connect these forested tracts with greenways or greenbelts, where possible.
- ◆ Identify and preserve, through Open Space purchase, donations or conservation easement, unique historic and archaeological sites, prominent ledge outcrops and significant glacial features. Organizations responsible for planning include the Milford Historical Society, the Planning and Zoning Board, the Mayor's Open Space Advisory Committee, the Connecticut State Archeologist and the Board of Alderman.
- ◆ Revise zoning map to designate open space and conservation areas as "Open Space". The City's zoning regulations have an Open Space District for land that is dedicated to remain largely in an undeveloped state for purposes of providing passive or active recreation, wildlife and nature preserves, farmland, forest and other open space purposes.
- ◆ Encourage the protection of slopes greater than 20%, ridgelines and hilltops by minimizing disturbance and vegetation removal. These efforts are required to maintain wildlife corridors, habitat, woodland integrity and visual amenity for those areas where a unique or fragile environmental condition is identified.

- ◆ Identify and preserve scenic vistas and view sheds that enhance community character. This can be accomplished by open space preservation techniques or through site development review standards for properties that cannot be preserved as open space.
- ◆ Establish and maintain adequate and appropriate buffers around wetlands, tidal marshes and vegetation/habitat transition zones via Open Space purchase, donation or conservation easements. Organizations involved in planning include the Milford Inlands Wetlands and Watercourses Agency, the Planning and Zoning Board, and the Board of Aldermen.
- ◆ Because of their uniqueness and their linkage to Milford's past, preserve significant remaining farmland in Milford through the purchase of development rights.
- ◆ Encourage the preservation of 100-year flood zone and environmentally sensitive areas of flood fringe with the use of Open Space purchase, donation or conservation easements. Organizations involved in planning include the City Engineer, the Milford Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency, the Planning and Zoning Board and the Board of Aldermen.
- ◆ Encourage environmentally-sensitive development using conservation design principles as a means of minimizing land disturbance while maximizing Open Space preservation.
- ◆ Promulgate zoning and subdivision regulations that would require developers to dedicate or set aside open space in such a way as to directly link with existing committed or uncommitted open space in the surrounding region. Where wetlands are involved, the open space dedication must include upland transitional buffer to protect significant herptiles and other flora and fauna. The objectives of this regulation are to avoid fragmentation of open space, to prevent degradation of important natural resources and to promote greenbelt and greenway linkages.
- ◆ While the amount of vacant land remaining in Milford that might be subject of residential subdivision is limited, a policy concerning open space donation versus payment in lieu must be established. If payment in lieu is accepted,

such payments should be dedicated to an open space acquisition fund.

- ◆ Update and revise current zoning and subdivision regulations to reflect and incorporate the concepts embodied in the above policy statements. Organizations involved in planning include the Mayor's Open Space Advisory Committee, the Conservation Commission, the Planning and Zoning Board, and the Board of Aldermen.
- ◆ Establish open space acquisition priorities that reflect community consensus and recognize that an increase in the amount of protected open space should be established as a goal but may not be as important as the location, quality and function of the open space.
- ◆ Develop and maintain a Natural Resources Inventory that includes a comprehensive listing of notable natural resources in the City. Such an inventory could be used by various boards and commissions when reviewing future development and or land acquisition plans.

GOAL: *Maintenance of Open Space and Recreation Areas*

On-going maintenance of open space and recreation areas is essential. Throughout the Plan of Conservation and Development update process public concern was voiced regarding the need for park maintenance and the continual upkeep of open space. Poorly maintained open space is not only an eyesore but also presents safety concerns. The creation of a department or municipal position of Land Management Officer would provide for oversight of the City's open space resources; coordination of acquisition and preservation activities, on-going maintenance of open space areas; and coordination of volunteer efforts and the efforts of open space organizations. However, a new position and increases in open space maintenance will require municipal budget consideration.

Policies

- ◆ Establish the municipal position of Land Management Officer to evaluate, initiate and coordinate open space land management activities.
- ◆ Develop and incorporate management or stewardship plans for open space lands to ensure on-going maintenance.

GOAL: *Greenbelts and Greenways*

One of the Open Space goals in Milford has been to create continuous linear buffers along major watercourses, including the Housatonic River, the Beaver Brook, the Wepawaug River, the Indian River, and the Calf Pen Meadow Corridor.

One of the City's main open space goals is to create continuous linear buffers along major watercourses, including the Housatonic River, the Beaver Brook, the Wepawaug River, the Indian River, and the Calf Pen Meadow Corridor. Currently, a major portion of the Beaver Brook is protected but still has stretches in need of future preservation and, ultimately, linkage to other natural features of Milford's landscape. In addition to providing access, protected greenways and greenbelts provide habitat for wildlife and vegetation, minimize the danger of erosion, provide renovation of air, and enhance surface water quality as well as groundwater quality within aquifer recharge areas.

According to the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), "Greenways are corridors of Open Space that protect natural resources; link urban, suburban and rural Open Space; and give residents convenient access to the outdoors. They can be as narrow as a bikeway or as wide as a river valley."

In this plan, the City provides a distinction between greenbelts which have been defined locally as lands left in their natural state and do not have walking trails or other forms of active recreation, and greenways which may have walking or biking trails.

Create a network of linked Open Spaces across the length and width of the City to provide habitat protection for plants and animals, active and passive recreational experiences, opportunities for aesthetic enjoyment, and educational opportunities.

As part of the implementation of this plan, efforts will be undertaken to create a network of linked Open Spaces across the length and width of the City. This would provide habitat protection for plants and animals, active and passive recreational experiences for citizens, opportunities for aesthetic enjoyment, and educational opportunities for school children and adults.

Public access can be provided to some of the greenbelts. However, some areas are too fragile or cross private properties, thus making public access inappropriate and impractical.

There are six natural greenbelts within the borders of Milford plus east/west greenbelt connections or linkages. The greenbelts take their origin from the open space systems delineated in the 1972 City Plan of Development. Because they may be able to provide public trails in appropriate areas,

For purposes of this plan, “greenways” are associated with walking trails, while “greenbelts” connote lands preserved in their natural state but usually without walking trails or other types of recreational activities.

some of these greenbelts may become greenways. The present greenbelts are as follows:

Housatonic River Greenbelt – The Housatonic River Greenbelt is located on the western border of the City along the Housatonic River and runs in a north/south direction. It connects to the uplands in northwestern Milford via its tributary, the Lower Turkey Hill Brook.

Beaver Brook Greenbelt – The Beaver Brook Greenbelt runs from Oronoque Road to the Housatonic River just before its confluence with Long Island Sound in the southwestern part of the City and runs in a north/south direction.

Wepawaug River Greenbelt – The Wepawaug River Greenbelt runs in a north/south direction and extends from the northwestern part of Milford to the mouth of Milford Harbor, where it joins with the Indian River.

Indian River Greenbelt – The Indian River Greenbelt extends from the northeastern portion of Milford to the mouth of the Wepawaug River and Milford Harbor. It runs in a north/south direction. Its tributary, Stubby Plain Brook, runs parallel to the Indian River on the west, then cuts eastward south of Sunnyside Lane to join with the Indian River northwest of the Indian River Bridge at New Haven Avenue.

Calf Pen Meadow Greenbelt – The Calf Pen Meadow Greenbelt, which runs in a north/south direction, is located south of New Haven Avenue near the southeastern edge of Settler’s Woods and extends to Long Island Sound between Bayview and Point Beaches.

Farley Brook/Oyster River Greenbelt - Oyster River runs in a north/south direction, then juts eastward at Anderson Avenue and forms the eastern boundary of Milford. Farley Brook originates south of I-95 in the Research Drive region and flows in a southerly direction until south of Brewster Road, then parallels New Haven Avenue eastward before flowing north of Dunbar Road to join with the Oyster River at the Anderson Avenue Bridge.

Policies

- ◆ Expand the evolving system of greenways and greenbelts along the shores of the major waterways in Milford by exercising various methods of property acquisition for parcels deemed worthy of protection.
- ◆ Create and expand a network of linked open spaces across the length and breadth of the City through linkages with existing greenways, greenbelts and other open space lands.
- ◆ Encourage voluntary action by private property owners in granting conservation easements to the City along watercourses that traverse developed residential, commercial and industrial properties. A conservation easement will ensure preservation of environmentally sensitive land in its natural state.

GOAL: Wetlands and Watercourses

Milford's Inland Wetlands and Watercourses are regulated by the local Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency. According to its regulations, wetlands and watercourses are defined as follows:

"Watercourses" mean rivers, streams, brooks, waterways, lakes, ponds, marshes, swamps, bogs, and all other bodies of water, natural or artificial, perennial, vernal or intermittent, public or private, which are contained within, flow through, or border upon the City or any portion thereof.

"Wetlands" mean land, including submerged land which consists of any of the soil types designated as poorly drained, very poorly drained, alluvial and floodplain by the National Cooperative Soils Survey, as it may be amended from time to time, by the National Resource Conservation Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Such areas may include filled, graded, or excavated sites or made land which possesses a saturated soil moisture regime as defined by the USDA Cooperative Soil Survey.

"Regulated Area" means any inland wetlands and watercourses...and any additional area...within 50 feet or 150 feet from each point on the boundary of a wetland or watercourse.

The official city wetlands map does not show all known wetlands, especially those under 3 acres in size and isolated vernal pools and springs. A field survey is needed to locate such wetlands and water features and to accurately delineate all wetland and watercourse boundaries whenever an application for an encroachment is filed with the Agency.

Special wetland and watercourse features in Milford are as follows:

- An extensive system of watercourses, including the Housatonic River, the Beaver Brook, the Wepawaug River, the Indian River, and Calf Pen Meadow/Gulf Pond, and the Milford Harbor, most of which run north/south through Milford and empty into the Long Island Sound.
- The mudflats of Gulf Pond and Milford Harbor, which are of regional

Preservation of wetlands and watercourses must be considered in all land use decisions. Such preservation is essential to maintaining the integrity of the Long Island Sound.

significance to the shellfish industry.

- An artesian spring, possibly the deepest in New England, which is located in the MI-7 parcel owned by the Regional Water Authority.
- Significant vernal pools which occur on an intermittent basis during periods of heavy rain or spring thaw. Such vernal pools provide areas for amphibian species to breed during their spring reproductive cycles. An example of such a vernal pool is in wetland 1 of the parcel currently proposed for development by AvalonBay of Milford.

Some of these wetlands and watercourses are extensive, while other smaller ones are “one of a kind”. Milford continues to preserve these wetlands and watercourses by regulation, open space acquisition, and conservation easements. Preservation of wetlands and watercourses must be considered in all land use decisions. Such preservation is essential to maintaining the integrity of the Long Island Sound. Because preservation and protection of the City’s wetlands and watercourses is a crucial, a citywide natural resources inventory that is updated on a regular basis should be developed and used in the review of development and land acquisition plans.

Through its inland wetlands regulations, Milford can protect its inland wetlands and watercourses from activities that occur within these resources and within the upland buffer area (100-150 feet wide). However, Milford also has extensive tidal wetland areas to which inland wetlands regulations do not apply. While the State has regulatory jurisdiction over activities within wetlands, it has no similar upland review authority over most activities proposed adjacent to tidal wetlands that can adversely impact them. In order to fully protect tidal wetlands, the City’s zoning regulations should be amended to include a tidal wetland setback. An effective tidal wetland setback should apply not only to buildings, but to accessory structures and parking areas as well.

As shown on the Natural Resource Features Map, much of the City’s land area falls within the Coastal Zone Management Area. Activities

which occur in this area are subject to review and consistency with the regulatory requirements of the Connecticut Coastal Management Act (CCMA, Connecticut General Statutes Sections 22a-90 through 22a-112).

Policies

- ◆ The Milford Inland Wetland and Watercourses Agency is urged to revise its regulated area bordering watercourses from the current 50 foot limit to 100 feet, in conformity with the recommendations of the State Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). At places along watercourses of special environmental significance, the regulated area or buffer should extend appropriately beyond 100 feet. The Inland Wetland and Watercourses Agency revised its regulations in the Spring of 2001. Implementation of the new regulations should help to improve and protect the integrity and condition of the city's watercourses and wetlands.
- ◆ Pesticides, runoff, sewage discharges and failing septic systems all adversely affect water quality. Programs which urge city residents and property owners to eliminate the use of chemicals to maintain lawns and control pests should be supported. The City has a Community Freedom Lawn Initiative that has begun to address this issue. Controlling quantity of impervious surfaces and review of landscaping plans and drainage plans can have a positive effect on water quality.
- ◆ Develop and maintain a Natural Resources Inventory that includes a comprehensive listing of notable natural resources in the City. Such an inventory could be used by various boards and commissions when reviewing future development and or land acquisition plans.
- ◆ The Long Island Sound is important to the health and welfare of Milford residents. Milford's proximity to the Sound provides commercial uses, passive and active recreation and prime sites for

homes and businesses. To maximize these values and others, the quality of the waters and natural habitats of Long Island Sound must continue to be restored to healthy levels and protected from further degradation.

- ◆ In order to fully protect tidal wetlands, the city's zoning regulations should be amended to include a tidal wetland setback. An effective tidal wetland setback should apply not only to buildings, but to accessory structures and parking areas as well.

GOAL: *Floodplain Management*

Milford contains floodplains along its watercourses. All of these floodplains flood periodically as a result of spring thaw, spring rains and major storm events. Floodplains are natural storage areas for flood related overflows.

Building, grading, road construction and other activities proposed within a flood zone must be carefully reviewed by the City in order to:

Building, grading, road construction and other activities proposed within a flood zone must be carefully reviewed by the City in order to promote the health, public safety and general welfare of the community; control and minimize the extent of floods; reduce the occurrence of flooding and runoff; and minimize downstream flood impacts

- Promote the health, public safety and general welfare of the community; and
- Control and minimize the extent of floods and reduce the impact and occurrence of flooding and runoff and minimize downstream flood impacts.

The Connecticut Coastal Management Act (CCMA) policy regarding coastal flood hazard areas is to insure that development occurs in such a manner that hazards to life and property are minimized (CGS Sec. 22a-92(b)(2)(F)).

Residential development within coastal flood hazard areas typically places the most lives at risk regardless of whether the dwellings meet the first floor elevation requirements and other Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) building standards which are designed to minimize damage to structures. In addition to residents being placed in areas subject to severe flooding, multi-unit residential development within the coastal flood hazard areas also subjects utility and rescue workers to additional risks not typically associated with commercial and industrial uses.

Policies

- ◆ Pursue State and Federal funds available for the repair and restoration of flood and erosion-damaged floodplains and drainage systems.

- ◆ Continue to review every land development proposal for management of on-site storm runoff.
- ◆ Change current Inland Wetlands and Watercourses regulations to regulate development within 100 feet of all wetlands and watercourses to minimize short-term impacts and to avoid long-term impacts.
- ◆ Multi-unit residential development in flood hazard areas should not be permitted unless hazards to life and property can be minimized. For example, developments that provide immediate access to high ground and include an evacuation plan may minimize the associated risks of locating residences in flood hazard areas.

GOAL: Aquifers

An aquifer is any earth material that is saturated with groundwater and capable of yielding adequate quantities of water to a properly constructed well. The State of Connecticut has adopted a comprehensive groundwater strategy and a model regulation designed to protect individual and community wells, both current and future. Basically, the strategy is to control the types of land use above and surrounding the aquifers deemed important for present and future water supplies. Specific guidelines have been established.

It is important to control the types of land uses above and surrounding the aquifers deemed important for present and future water supplies.

Aquifer protection requires the control of point and non-point pollution sources that may enter the aquifer through the wellfield, at the drawdown area, or at its indirect and direct recharge areas. For Milford, aquifer protection is still required in the area surrounding Milford Reservoir, part of the Beaver Brook Aquifer, and in areas where potable well water is still obtained for residential use in the northeastern part of the City.

While aquifer protection regulations have not yet been adopted, the City advocates specific measures that the public is urged to follow in order to protect this invaluable resource.

Policies

- ◆ On commercial and industrial sites located above existing aquifers, advocate activities that are less intensive and less likely to discharge contaminants, especially oils, solvents and chemicals into the groundwater.
- ◆ Develop zoning and subdivision regulations to identify where underground fuel oil storage tanks can be located.
- ◆ Promote cautious use of agricultural chemical and lawn care chemicals Citywide, especially in the major aquifer areas. Follow

the Farm Resources Management Plans established by the DEP for proper use and handling of fertilizers and pesticides, waste management, and fuel and chemical storage.

- ◆ Promote and support the State of Connecticut incentive to regulate underground residential fuel storage tanks, including the registration of all existing underground tanks.
- ◆ Discourage underground fuel storage tanks when other alternatives exist.
- ◆ Encourage safe storage and use of salt, chemicals, fuels, oils, solvents and other potential groundwater pollutants by industries, commercial establishments and institutions. Advocate cautious use of road salt on City roads.
- ◆ Consider a minimum of one-acre zoning in areas where construction would have a significant detrimental impact on the underlying aquifer.

GOAL: *Stormwater Management & Watershed Protection*

Storm drainage management involves the comprehensive management of surface water runoff in order to reduce adverse impacts such as loss of life, property damage, channel erosion, habitat destruction, water quality degradation, and damage to roads and utilities.

Coastal water quality is intimately tied to, and dependent upon, activities on the upland. Thus, decisions which impact land use and inland water quality can affect coastal water quality and therefore, coastal resources.

Because of its topography, its extensive system of watercourses, its flood prone areas, erosion prone soils and continuing land development, Milford has experienced periodic flooding. These impacts result in erosion and flooding as well as diminish water quality. Erosion and flooding result in degradation of wetlands and watercourses from uncontrolled storm peak flows and may cause erosion and flooding downstream. Diminished water quality impacts wetlands and watercourses as a result of erosion-generated sedimentation and transport of pollutants from paved surfaces, landscaped areas and from use and disposal of water polluting substances. These issues are routinely reviewed and evaluated by the Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Agency.

Coastal water quality is intimately tied to, and dependent upon, activities on the upland. Thus, decisions which impact land use and inland water quality can affect coastal water quality and therefore, coastal resources. Coastal water quality and coastal resources are threatened by non-point sources which supply excess nutrients such as nitrogen, toxic substances, heavy metals and pathogens to both groundwater and surface waterbodies. Sites that are far removed from inland or coastal resources can adversely impact both inland and coastal water quality.

From a watershed management perspective, there is a well-established negative correlation between the percentage of impervious cover in a watershed and water quality. According to the University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension's Project NEMO (Non-point Education for Municipal Officials), watershed studies have shown that once impervious surfaces in a watershed reach a total of about 10 percent of the land cover, water quality begins to decline. Once 25 percent impervious cover is reached, significant and probably irreversible water quality impacts will occur. Therefore, as a general rule, highly impervious areas should be designed so that impacts from runoff are minimized.

While watershed management can provide general development guidance such as where best to locate high-density uses, site specific water quality controls must be implemented on a site by site basis. To date in Milford, in many instances, stormwater runoff continues to be managed with outdated

techniques such as draining untreated runoff to the nearest stream either directly or via the city's drainage system. In part, this is a reflection of the lack of importance placed on resource protection in the City's current zoning regulations. Developers, in meeting the standards of the Zoning Regulations, should be submitting plans that manage stormwater runoff through the use of good site design and stormwater best management practices (BMP).

Storm drainage management involves the comprehensive management of surface water runoff in order to reduce adverse impacts such as loss of life, property damage, channel erosion, habitat destruction, water quality degradation, and damage to roads and utilities. Milford needs to develop citywide policy guidelines for the management of storm drainage within its watersheds.

Policies

- ◆ Prepare a detailed inventory and analysis of each watershed in Milford. Base the report on an investigation of local geology, soils, climate, flood problems, drainage systems and land use. The primary goal of the inventory is to provide guidance on how to reduce the impact of development on natural and man-made drainage systems. Recommendations should be made for the improvement of existing drainage systems and for the construction of new drainage systems if necessary. In addition, recommendations should be made for storm water renovation through best management practices.
- ◆ Base watershed planning guidelines on soil and water characteristics of watershed areas and incorporate them into appropriate zoning and subdivision regulations.
- ◆ Review and revise zoning regulations to place more importance on watershed management and resource protection.
- ◆ Establish overall standards for impervious cover for each watershed

in the City.

- ◆ Review and revise zoning regulations to ensure that maximum building and total lot coverage standards reflect the impervious cover goals of the watershed as established.
- ◆ Developers, in meeting the standards of the Zoning Regulations, should be required to submit plans that manage stormwater runoff through the use of good site design and stormwater best management practices (BMP).
- ◆ Create a Stormwater Management ordinance to be applied to all significant development (to be determined by zoning). The ordinance should address both water quantity and water quality issues. The ordinance could also include resource buffers and setbacks, parking lot standards, retention requirements, maintenance, and source control.
- ◆ Parking lots account for a significant percentage of the impervious cover in many watersheds and thus are a major contributor of stormwater runoff. The stormwater ordinance could be used to establish parking standards designed to minimize the number of spaces allowed to ensure that parking lots are not sized for peak seasonal utilization but rather expected daily use. Additional seasonal parking could be provided in areas with high pervious cover.
- ◆ Parking lot designs that use parking medians to treat stormwater runoff could be encouraged.
- ◆ New parking lots proposed in wooded areas could be designed such that significant trees can be maintained in the landscaped areas. Mature trees reduce pavement and air temperatures and thus minimize thermal impacts to discharge areas. Mature trees also intercept rainfall thereby reducing the volume of runoff.

- ◆ Zoning regulations could be amended to allow shared parking and other techniques that would reduce the overall parking areas needed in a watershed. For example, adjacent uses where parking is used during different times of the week/day could share parking to reduce stormwater runoff and associated construction and maintenance costs.

GOAL: *Site Development Regulations for Non-Residential Districts*

There are few large undeveloped parcels remaining in Milford. Therefore, development activity in the future will occur predominately on smaller vacant or under-developed parcels on an in-fill basis. What will be important is the nature and extent of site landscaping, buffer areas, paved areas and building orientations.

There are few large undeveloped parcels remaining in Milford. Therefore, development activity in the future will occur predominately on smaller vacant or under-developed parcels on an in-fill basis. This type of development will not address open space conservation issues within the framework of Cluster Developments or Design Office Districts, as might have been the case in the past with larger parcels. What will be important is the nature and extent of site landscaping, buffer areas, paved areas and building orientations. Currently, non-residential districts with exception of the Design Office District do not have requirements for open space. In fact there is no maximum lot coverage requirement, but only a maximum building area requirement. There are landscaped buffer requirements only when the property is adjacent to a Residential District. The amount of landscaping required within parking areas is limited with a requirement of 1 tree at least 1½ inches in diameter for every 5 parking spaces and landscaping of the portion of the parking area not used for parking and circulation. There is no buffer requirement for the area between the public right-of-way and the parking area.

Policies

- ◆ Amend the site development regulations for non-residential districts to include the following:
 - Maximum lot coverages for buildings, structures and paved areas.
 - Required buffers of a specific standard at the property lines.
 - Landscaping requirements with specific plant materials and larger minimum sizes.
 - A specific ratio of landscaped area to the amount of parking.
 - Regulations that require the maintenance, and if necessary, the replacement of landscaping plants and

materials to maintain compliance with requirements listed above.

- ◆ While these revised site development regulations will not necessarily address the appearance of currently developed properties, they will provide a higher standard for future development.
- ◆ With the anticipated increase in applications for more intensive use of already developed parcels and in-fill development due to the declining amount of vacant land, the nature and extent of open space buffers and landscaping as part of site plan requirements should be increased.
- ◆ It is further recommended that the preservation of existing trees and the planting of additional trees be considered an important element of site development including street trees in residential subdivision and commercial/industrial areas.
- ◆ The organizations involved in this process should include the City Engineer, the Milford Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency, the Planning and Zoning Board, the Milford Tree Commission and the Tree Warden.

GOAL: *Active Recreation Program*

During the process of preparing this Open Space component of the Plan of Conservation and Development for Milford, many neighborhood and topical workshop participants expressed interest in specific types of active recreation. The major themes that emerged included:

- small neighborhood-based active recreation areas for children;
- creation of “play streets” by reducing traffic on selected local residential streets;
- pedestrian and bicycle connections between open space areas;
- increased use of open space areas for environmental education programs; and
- additional facilities for various sports activities, including horseback riding, skateboarding and BMX bicycling.

Eisenhower Park and Fowler Memorial Field are the two major municipal recreation areas. These two recreation areas have the acreage to accommodate multiple uses and are located in two distinct sections of the City. In addition, both recreation areas have the potential for linkages to larger open space systems. Eisenhower Park has a variety of fields with the potential for additional facilities, and the City has recently acquired areas for open space preservation adjacent to or near the park. Fowler Memorial Field is located in an area that creates a key link between Milford Harbor and the downtown region as well as with adjacent neighborhoods and is directly linked to Wilcox Park, a designated nature preserve.

The utilization of Eisenhower Park and Fowler Memorial Field should be carefully reviewed to ensure that they are utilized to their fullest capacity and best use. For instance, winter sports such as ice skating, cross-country skiing, and snow shoeing should be encouraged where feasible. Eisenhower Park has the capacity to be more fully utilized if trails are developed for cross country skiing.

Policies

- ◆ Determine the specific short- and long-term needs for playing fields and other active recreation facilities. Organizations involved in this process include the Milford Park, Beach and Recreation Commission, neighborhood associations and the Planning and Zoning Board.
- ◆ The Milford Park, Beach and Recreation Commission should determine the specific needs for active playing fields, based upon a review of programmatic needs and available resources.
- ◆ Develop a short- and long-term program to improve the facilities available to the public at Eisenhower Park.
- ◆ Proposals for recreation or park facilities should be discussed with the affected neighborhood associations and groups prior to their establishment.
- ◆ Eisenhower Park and Fowler Memorial Field should be evaluated as the centers of community park activities, based upon the adoption of a community-wide plan developed by the Milford Park, Beach and Recreation Commission.
- ◆ Expand neighborhood parks and playgrounds through a combination of the acquisition of new and expanded school sites and the acquisition or expansion of small neighborhood park sites.
- ◆ Neighborhood based recreation and small parks should be considered within the framework of neighborhood-based grass roots planning. The nature and location of such neighborhood recreation areas should be determined with local community input. Costs and responsibilities for maintenance must be part of these planning efforts.

- ◆ Improve and encourage volunteerism and community organization associated with open space/recreational facility maintenance and usage.
- ◆ Efforts should be made to ensure that recreational areas are utilized to their fullest capacity and best use.
- ◆ Provide pedestrian and bicycle connections between open space areas, public facilities and neighborhoods, where feasible. The attached maps show a potential network of bicycle trails and habitat viewing trails. It is important that any such connections be provided within a system which ensures public safety. A policy of exclusive pedestrian and bicycle paths which are not within the roadway used by vehicles should be the basis for the network. Planning for this process should include the active involvement of the Parks, Beach and Recreation Commission, the Department of Public Works, Planning and Zoning Board, and the Board of Aldermen.
- ◆ Most of Milford's coastline is currently developed with residential uses. Most public access is located in city- and state-owned parks, where usage is high. Since the demand for public access is high, the city should maximize any remaining opportunities to provide public access to coastal waters. Strict adherence to Connecticut Coastal Management Act (CCMA) policies pertaining to water-dependent uses at waterfront sites could help to increase public access over time. However, since, such a small percentage of the City's shoreline is currently occupied by active water-dependent uses, public access should not be expanded at the expense of losing these active uses.
- ◆ Identify and address the issues of dangerous intersections in areas with heavy pedestrian usage and along bicycle and pedestrian routes. Traffic calming, signalization, signage and site plan review of new development at and near identified intersections and pedestrian-ways are methods to address safety concerns.

- ◆ A healthy and vibrant appearance for Milford will be best achieved by putting urban design principles into practice. A short and long-term plan for sidewalks and other pedestrian corridors that connect schools, neighborhoods, parks and beaches in addition to navigating across busy state roads shall be developed. The plan shall also indicate where environmental concerns reign over road widening such as preserving notable trees and scenic roads; where new subdivisions will require sidewalks; and where road improvements/intersections will be aligned to meet pedestrian and bicycle needs.
- ◆ Milford's "sidewalks to nowhere" will be reevaluated and connected as opportunities arise during infill and new development. City officials will work with State planners to achieve these goals on our many State roads.
- ◆ In 2001, Milford's Environmental Concerns Coalition sponsored the development and publication of a booklet entitled "Milford's Favorite Walks". The purpose of the booklet is to highlight pedestrian routes and attractions in Milford as a means to encourage the development and maintenance of walkway opportunities in the City.
- ◆ Use various traffic calming techniques and signage to discourage through traffic on selected local streets. This concept should be studied in cooperation with the Department of Public Works and the Police Commission acting as the City's Traffic Authority.
- ◆ The City and the YMCA, in consultation with youth groups, should meet and discuss the short- and long-term recreational needs of Milford.

GOAL: *Environmental Education Program*

Consistent with the overall philosophy of the importance of creation of a green infrastructure, it is important to provide environmental education whereby an appreciation of open space and natural resources is nurtured.

Education is basic to an appreciation of the natural environment and should begin early in life. Young people should be involved in this process by exploring the interrelationships that exist among the plants and animals that are residents of, or visitors on selected and unique open space lands in Milford. The growth in knowledge of natural history and the excitement of discovery go hand-in-hand, and nowhere is this more evident than in young children exposed to the right setting and tutored by competent and interested teachers. The anticipated result is an increased sensitivity to our living world and the natural environment that supports it.

Consistent with the overall philosophy of the importance of creation of a green infrastructure, it is appropriate to involve young people in a process whereby an appreciation of open space and natural resources is nurtured. In this regard, it is recommended that programs which integrate open space/natural resource protection into the school curriculum be strengthened and expanded. An example of such a program is the one currently in place at Mondo Ponds Park with John F. Kennedy School in close proximity. Similar opportunities exist at several schools located within close proximity to natural resource areas such as: Calf Pen Meadow School and Joseph A. Foran High in the Calf Pen River Area, Harborside Middle School in the Wepawaug River/Harbor Area and Mathewson School in the Eisenhower Park/Wepawaug River Area.

Policies

- ◆ Strengthen and expand existing programs that integrate outdoor nature education into the public elementary school curriculum with the use of appropriate open space lands and educational guidance and mentoring.
- ◆ Develop a pilot ecosystem based nature education program for the fifth grade using Mondo Ponds as a model and the support of

appropriate experts in curriculum development and nature study. The program would be used first by students at the Kennedy School and then would expand to the other elementary schools in Milford.

- ◆ Produce a video documentary on Mondo Ponds that would complement the ecosystem based education program for the fifth grade.
- ◆ The Board of Education, interested public school teachers, the Conservation Commission, community non-profit organizations and interested Citizens should work to advance the educational concepts described above.

OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION & ACQUISITION METHODS

In order to achieve the Open Space Conservation and Preservation Goals and Policies set forth in this plan a variety of preservation and acquisition techniques and methods should be used. The following implementation and acquisition methods could be used as appropriate to accomplish the City's Open Space Plan.

Fee Simple Acquisition

- ◆ Outright Land Purchase by the City.
- ◆ Gift of Land either directly to the City or to the Milford Conservation Land Trust.
- ◆ Life Estates where the City purchases land with the provision that the owner can continue living on the land until his or her death, after which the City acquires all rights. This approach is usually less expensive to purchase since it allows continual use of the property by owners and may spread the costs over a period of several years.
- ◆ Purchase and Leaseback where the City acquires the property and leases the land back to the owner or another party for a certain type of use or development subject to restrictions.
- ◆ Transfer of land from one government entity to another.
- ◆ Land Lease. A problem with this method is that the land may be prohibitively expensive to purchase once the lease expires. The inclusion of a specific purchase option within the lease agreement may solve this problem.
- ◆ Mandatory Dedications of Open Space as part of subdivision approval. The City currently requires that a portion of new subdivisions be set aside as open space.

- ◆ Fees in Lieu of Open Space Dedication or Impact Fees. Instead of requiring the dedication of open space within particular subdivisions, fees in lieu of land dedication can be required as part of subdivision approval. Fees in Lieu of open space dedication should become part of a special Open Space Acquisition and Protection Account that the City can use to purchase priority open space land in other areas of the City. This approach is useful in instances where the land being subdivided has a minimal amount of natural features worth protecting or when the land to be dedicated would not meet the City's long-term open space objective of a network of interconnected open space areas.

Payment of fees in lieu of providing open space should be allowed only as the less preferable alternative to the provision of open space in developments. Payment in lieu should only be utilized if the development site does not contain acceptable land which merits preservation, has little or no land with natural features of note or if such lands would not meet the City's open space goals and objectives. Any fees obtained in lieu of open space should be utilized to purchase parcels or tracts of land that meet the City's open space objectives, contain key natural or cultural resources and/or provide connection to other open space or conservation areas.

- ◆ Condemnation. Condemnation is the legal right of government to take private land for public purpose with just compensation provided to the owner. This approach is only recommended in extreme problem cases.

Conservation Easements

- ◆ Under a conservation easement land remains in private ownership. A conservation easement, which is a legal agreement, can be defined as a "partial interest in property that is transferred to a non-profit or government agency". Property owners retain legal title and all rights to the land with the exception of development rights.

- ◆ Conservation easements work well to protect natural resources on lands where public access is not needed.
- ◆ Depending upon the specifics of the agreement, easements may or may not allow public access to a parcel.
- ◆ Under a Conservation Easement, the property owner retains private ownership but conveys the right to enforce the easement's restrictions to a qualified conservation recipient such as the City or an approved non-profit entity such as the Land Trust.
- ◆ There are a variety of different conservation easements used by municipalities to protect valuable resources. In addition to Land Conservation Easements or Natural Resource Protection Easements, municipalities have developed Historic Preservation Easements, Agricultural Preservation Easements and Scenic View Easements.

Purchase of Development Rights

- ◆ The purchase of development rights allows a landowner to retain ownership of the property, but the owner receives a payment for the “development rights” to that property. The property remains on the tax role but at a lower rate because of the restricted use. As ownership changes, restriction on the land remains with the parcel.
- ◆ This technique of land preservation is recommended to preserve the City's remaining significant agricultural lands. This method will allow for the continuation of farming which is a link to the City's past.

Modification of Existing Zoning Regulations

- ◆ The City's current Zoning Regulations need to be revised to reflect the Open Space Preservation and Conservation concepts set forth in the Plan of Conservation and Development.

- ◆ The creation of a Conservation Design Subdivision regulation, as set forth in the Housing portion of this plan, could be used to further the City's open space goals.
- ◆ Open Space/Cluster Zoning where contiguous or semi-contiguous portions of land within subdivisions are retained in their natural state.
- ◆ Development Design Review Standards should be created for both residential and non-residential development in the City. Such Design Standards could include, among others, the type and quantity of vegetation and plantings, revised standards for impervious surfaces and lot coverage, and siting and design requirements for structures (particularly for in-fill development).

Preservation Overlay Zoning

- ◆ The creation of overlay zones which have certain development restrictions can be created to protect a variety of natural or cultural resource areas such as floodplains, wetlands, riparian lands, watercourses, agricultural areas, scenic view areas and/or historic, cultural or archaeologically significant resources.

Coastal Area Management (CAM)

- ◆ A large percentage of Milford's land area falls within the State of Connecticut's Coastal Management Zone. Such lands are subject to site plan review to ensure protection of natural resources within this area and consistency with the intent of the City's and the State's Coastal Area Management Plans. Protecting natural resources, encouraging water related use and providing public access to the Long Island Sound are key to such review.

3. HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVATION

BACKGROUND

As one of the principle land uses in a community, housing and housing-related issues, affect all residents. The Connecticut State Statute Sec. 8-23, which sets standards for a municipal Plan of Conservation and Development reads, “Such plan will make provision for the development of housing opportunities, including opportunities for multi-family dwellings, consistent with soil types, terrain and infrastructure capacity. Such plan shall also promote housing choice and economic diversity in housing, including housing for both low and moderate income households”.

LAND USE

As shown on the Existing Land Use Map which follows page 3, residential development comprises most of the City's land area. This map displays the use of every parcel of land in Milford in one of 28 land use categories including various residential categories. Table 6 presents the total number of parcels and amount of acreage within these land use categories. It should be noted that these parcels do not include water bodies or street right-of-ways. Therefore, the total acreage is less than the total acreage within the entire City.

**Table 6 (same figures as Table 1)
Existing Land Use - 2000 (Revised February 2002)**

LAND USE	NUMBER OF PARCELS	ACRES*
Agriculture	27	278
Apartment/Condominium	246	422
Automotive Sales/Service	113	139
Bank	14	9
Business Office	184	345
Commercial Recreation	9	24
Extraction/Processing Sand and Gravel	10	157
Golf Course	4	131
Hotel/Motel	13	31
Land Trust	26	114
Landfill	1	40
Manufacturing	154	403
Marine Sales/Service	6	11
Miscellaneous Open Space	278	1,525
Municipal Facilities	246	146
Private Institutions (including cemeteries)	90	209
Public Park	31	690
Rest Home	5	12
Restaurant/Tavern	64	53
Retail Sales/Service (General)	289	417
School	23	264
Single Family	15,245	4,833
State & Federal Facilities	55	155
Three to Five Family	69	22
Trailer Park	3	30
Two Family	478	118
Utilities/Parking Facilities	75	244
Vacant Land	1,380	1,090
Wholesale/Distribution/Heavy Commercial	109	223
Miscellaneous Un-Classified	71	2
TOTAL	19,318	12,139

* Acreage rounded to the nearest full number.

There are several land use categories worthy of discussion. However, the most significant category for planning purposes related to housing development is the amount of vacant land currently available in the community. It is this land which will be the focus of future land use decisions both in terms of development and conservation. These land use decisions will be made by the private sector and public sector within the framework of existing and future land use controls. In the case of Milford, the 1,090 acres of vacant land or approximately 9% of all land is indicative of a mature community in terms of development. This vacant land is distributed over some 1,380 individual parcels shown on the Vacant Land and Environmental Features Map of which 1,268 are of 2 acres or less in size. Approximately 64% of the vacant land is located north of I-95 and 36% is located south of I-95. Furthermore, as will be discussed later, much of this land is impacted by natural features such as wetlands, floodplains and steep slopes. Therefore, the amount of land available for development is actually much less than the total acreage in the vacant land category.

DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL & HISTORICAL TRENDS

An analysis of vacant land was undertaken in 1990 as part of a previous update to the Plan of Development. At that time, 2,650 acres were categorized as vacant. This 2,650 acres was approximately 50% of the 5,150 acres categorized as vacant in 1967 as part of the planning process for the 1969 Plan of Development. While the definition of vacant land and the method of calculation has varied somewhat between the 1967, 1990 and 2000 studies, we believe that there is enough commonality to use these 3 benchmark years for comparison purposes. The 1969 Plan contained an estimate of vacant land from the 1956 Plan of Development which would indicate that land had been developed at an average rate of 200 acres per year between 1956 and 1967. The average between 1967 and 1990 was approximately 100 acres per year. The average between 1990 and 2000 was approximately 150 acres per year. However, it is important to note that over the last 10 years several parcels have been either acquired or dedicated for open space which were categorized as vacant in 1990.

Therefore, the actual amount of vacant land committed to development would be less than the 150 acres per year average.

At the time of analysis in 1990, approximately 1,700 of the 2,650 acres of vacant land was zoned for residential purposes. Based upon physical development constraints and zoning in effect at that time, it was estimated that a range of 2,250 to 2,530 additional dwelling units could have been potentially built on residentially zoned vacant land. It was further calculated that PRD's and development in non-residential districts could add an additional 510 to 710 units for total range of 2,760 to 3,240 units of potential development.

In order to estimate dwelling units actually added since the 1990 analysis and 2000, a review of building permit activity was undertaken. As shown in Table 7, building permits for 1,921 units were actually issued during the period between 1990 and 1999.

Table 7
Housing Permits Issued
1990 - 1999

	Total	Single Family Detached	Single Family Attached	3 - 4 Family	5+ Family	State Rank by Net Gain
1990	80	32	40	0	8	28 TH
1991	163	73	20	12	58	5 TH
1992	202	107	66	20	9	1 ST
1996	231	189	42	0	0	4 TH
1994	236	199	37	0	0	3 RD
1995	197	154	43	0	0	4 TH
1996	174	141	9	0	24	4 TH
1997	197	153	0	19	25	3 RD
1998	183	183	0	0	0	13 TH
1999	258	151	0	0	107	5 TH
TOTAL	1,921	1,382	257	51	231	

Source: State of Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development

Milford has experienced substantial development of vacant land over the last 10 years. Most of this development has occurred on the “better” land. Because of this, land use boards and commissions will be receiving an increasing percentage of applications for development of properties containing environmentally sensitive areas.

These 1,921 units represent between 59% to 70% of the dwelling unit potential estimated in 1990 depending on which end of the range is selected. It should be remembered that this development potential was expressed as total build-out not intended to be accomplished in a particular time frame.

It is important to examine the zoning designation of the 2,650 acres of vacant land in 1990 with 1,700 acres or 64% residential and 900 acres or 36% non-residential as compared to 56% of residential land and 44% of non-residential land in 2000. Furthermore, in 1990 38% of the residential land was considered marginal land due to wetlands, steep slopes and floodplains. In 2000, the residential vacant land contains an estimated 49% of marginal land. For the non-residential land, 24% was considered marginal in 1990. In 2000, the non-residential vacant land contains an estimated 42% of marginal land.

As can be seen from these statistics, not only has Milford experienced substantial development of vacant land over the last 10 years, but this development has occurred on the “better” land. The percentage of marginal land in the vacant residential category has increased from 38% in 1990 to 49% in 2000. The percentage of marginal land in the vacant non-residential category has increased from 24% in 1990 to 42% in 2000. The impacts of this trend are three-fold:

- Land use boards and commissions will be receiving an increasing percentage of applications for development of properties containing environmentally sensitive areas.
- There will be increased pressure for in-fill development and more intensive development on developed properties with less development constraints.
- There will be a reduction in the amount of vacant land developed over the next 10 years as compared to the past.

Due to the lack of developable land, there will be increased pressure for in-fill development and more intensive development on developed properties with less development constraints.

All of these impacts have significant implications for planning policies over the next 10 years. These implications include:

- A change in the nature of housing development can be expected. Smaller projects and more in-fill development will most likely occur.
- For non-residential development, redevelopment of existing properties and adaptive re-use will be more prevalent than new development.

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT & POPULATION GROWTH

Housing development in a community has several impacts related to quality of life issues. These impacts may include: increased demand for community services; increased traffic; loss of open space and impacts on the natural environment; increased economic activity; increased involvement in community activities; and the perception of community change.

Housing development in a community has several impacts related to quality of life issues. These impacts may include: increased demand for community services with resulting fiscal impacts; increased traffic and perceived congestion in the street network; loss of open space and impact on the natural environment; increased economic activity in the area of retail sales and services; increased involvement in community activities; and the perception of community change. In recent years, Milford has experienced many changes in quality of life as expressed by residents during the neighborhood workshops. Specific examples of how growth impacts were affecting Milford were discussed.

It is interesting to note however that dramatic population growth has not occurred as a result in the increase in the number of dwelling units in Milford. In fact, Milford's overall population has continued to be in the 50,000 person range over the last several census counts as shown below:

<u>Census Year</u>	<u>Population</u>
1960	41,662
1970	50,858
1980	50,898
1990	49,938
2000	52,305

Past Plan of Development processes in Milford have tended to make estimates of population at development saturation at higher levels than will probably be reached. For example, the 1972 Plan estimated the population to grow to approximately 75,000 based on housing development potential. That estimate was based on the average household size of 3.5 persons. In the 1990 Plan Update, an average household size of 2.8 was used. The 1980 census household estimate was 2.87, therefore the 2.8 estimate was used because the 1990 estimate was not available when the 1990 Plan Update was prepared. Based on this household size, a population at full build-out of 60,000 was estimated at the high end of the additional dwelling unit potential (3,240 units). Over the last 10 years, approximately 59% of this 3,240 unit potential has been achieved through the issuance of building permits. However, population has remained quite stable. This can be attributed to the continuing decline in household size. The 1990 Census estimate of household size for Milford was 2.62 persons per household. By 2002, the average household size had declined to 2.48 persons per household.

If we use the 1990 dwelling unit estimate of 3,240 additional units as the ultimate build out and deduct the 1,921 units permitted since 1990, there would be a balance of 1,319 units to be potentially built. At an estimated household size of 2.48 persons per household, there would be a resulting population increase of 3,211 persons. Based upon the trends of smaller household sizes it is not anticipated that a more significant population increase will occur over the next several decades.

The quality of life issues discussed at the neighborhood meetings related to both population growth and density and, to a greater extent, the physical impacts of development. In addition, certain impacts such as increased traffic volumes are related to an increase in the number of dwelling units as

well as increased traffic generation per dwelling unit rather than pure population growth.

HOUSING & MARKET CONDITIONS

Milford has a predominately owner housing stock with the 1990 census recording 14,358 of 18,851 occupied housing units as owner occupied units. This represents approximately 76 percent of the total housing stock. The housing stock is mostly comprised of single unit, detached housing with 14,227 of the total 20,149 units in the City found in such structures. In terms of land use, 14,953 parcels for a total of 4,630 acres fall into this category. The 20,149 units represent an increase of 2,026 units over the 18,123 units recorded in 1980. Reports issued by the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development show an additional 1,921 units authorized by the issuance of a building permit in the period 1990 to 1999. Although 74% of these newly authorized units were traditional single family attached units more than 250 units were single family attached, 50 units were in 3 to 4 family and 230 were in structures with 5 or more units. According to the 2000 Census, the City had 21,962 total housing units. Of the 20,900 units occupied at the time of the Census, 16,418 (77.3%) were owner-occupied continuing the trend of predominant owner-occupancy.

Within the single family construction market, Milford has recently experienced significant development of homes at prices attractive to the Lower Fairfield County market. As discussed earlier, throughout the 1990's Milford ranked in the top 5 communities in Connecticut in terms of the number of single family housing permits issued on an annual basis. Much of the demand has come from this market. As a result, the last few large vacant parcels were developed or are currently under construction. In many ways, the size and visibility of these developments were responsible for the concern expressed at the neighborhood meetings about the need to slow down development and preserve open space. However, in reality, as discussed earlier in this memorandum, there is very little vacant land remaining in large parcels which could accommodate such development.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

There has been much discussion concerning the issue of housing affordability in Milford over the last several years. When one discusses housing affordability it is important to clearly define the parameters of affordability. One definition of affordability is that included under Section 8-30g wherein certain units are counted as affordable for purposes of determining a community's exemption from the Affordable Housing Appeals Program. Under that program, at least 10% of a community's housing stock must be affordable. Such units include those receiving government assistance for construction or rehabilitation, housing occupied by persons receiving rental assistance, homes financed by the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority and/or Farmer's Home Administration mortgages or deed restricted properties. In the most recent statistics released by the State of Connecticut, Milford has 1,289 or 5.87% of its units classified as affordable.

The second type of affordability is market based in terms of what is affordable based upon selling price versus median income levels. In Milford, a May 2000 listing of 235 homes on the market included 47 homes at prices of \$120,000 or less. These homes could be considered affordable to households at or near 80% of area median family income.

The third type of affordability relates to comparable housing in other housing markets. As described earlier, Milford is experiencing activity in its housing market due to the fact that housing prices are more "affordable" as compared to Lower Fairfield County. Therefore, housing is being produced which is affordable in certain market terms but not affordable for purposes of the Affordable Housing Appeals Procedure or affordable to moderate income households.

It is important to clarify the relationship of small lot open space housing developments or clustering to affordability. If such a design approach results in more units on a parcel or less cost to the developer then the units may be more affordable. However, such affordability only occurs when specific deed restrictions are imposed to control the private marketplace. Otherwise, the affordability becomes a pure market function consistent with

the third type of affordability described above. It would appear that this type of development has occurred in Milford in some recent subdivisions.

Housing affordability is affected by a wide variety of factors. Factors such as interest rates, labor and material costs, land costs, environmental constraints, consumer preference, market demand and local economic conditions all influence the availability, cost and affordability of housing. Most of these factors are beyond the control of local governments. However, specific actions which permit higher density residential development or the provision of density bonuses to projects which include affordable housing, support accessory apartments and/or encourage higher density mixed commercial/residential use projects in specific sections of the City may create an increase in the variety and affordability of housing in Milford.

Affordability is a relative term with respect to housing. Different income levels and economic or market circumstances determine how affordable the housing stock is. However, the State and the Federal government defines housing as affordable if it costs less than 30% of a household's income. Furthermore, the State is most concerned with affordable housing for those earning less than 80% of the area median income, usually referred to as "low and moderate income" households.

The City has developed a strategic plan for addressing the issues of housing affordability of low and moderate income households in its Consolidated Plan for Housing and Community Development: 2000 - 2004. The Housing Authority has also prepared a plan for the 2000 - 2004 period. Both of these plans were prepared for submission to HUD to meet federal regulatory requirements for the provision of affordable housing with federal funding.

To assist in the provision of affordable homeownership opportunities, the City offers a First Time Homebuyer Program with its federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding. A maximum loan of \$15,000 is made available to income eligible households to assist with downpayment and closing costs. This program serves to increase access and opportunities for homeownership to low- and moderate- income families

who are unable to accumulate adequate financial resources for closing costs, but are otherwise capable of meeting monthly homeownership costs.

During the 1990's several deed restricted developments were constructed in addition to cluster and planned residential developments (PRD). These developments purportedly were to make the units more affordable than they otherwise would have been under more traditional zoning.

An overview of Milford's housing market shows a community dominated by single-family housing units. Although there has been limited growth in single-family attached condominium-type units and multi-family construction, the City, like many other suburban communities in Connecticut, faces a tight and competitive rental market. Housing suitable for small households, especially young householders or elderly householders, and individuals or families with limited income is also tight.

HOUSING and PRESERVATION ISSUES

As a result of the analysis discussed above and the community dialogue as part of the process, several housing and neighborhood-related issues which face the City were brought forth. Issues to be addressed as part of the Plan Update include:

Housing

- There is a need to establish innovative approaches to in-fill development in order to not adversely impact existing neighborhoods. This issue is particularly important in the shoreline areas.
- While the number of large subdivision applications is expected to decline over the next 10 years, the design criteria for subdivisions should be reviewed to permit sensitive development in keeping with the character of the site with minimal negative impacts.

- The concept of mixed-use development inclusive of housing particularly in the Downtown, corridors and neighborhood centers should be refined and advanced as a development concept.
- Approaches to connecting currently disjointed residential subdivisions should be examined with an emphasis on pedestrian and bicycle connections in order to discourage cut through vehicular traffic.
- There is a need to provide for the creation of housing appropriate for the City's increasing elderly population as well as young households new to the housing market.
- The issue of affordable housing should be further analyzed to seek methods by which affordability can be achieved in a market where the construction of a significant number of new units is not projected.
- Attention to design issues including the development of appropriate criteria and guidelines should be a key component of future housing and preservation policy.

Preservation

- During the neighborhood and topical meetings, there were several comments related to the need to protect historic resources in Milford. There were concerns raised about enforcement of regulations within the existing historic district as well as negative impacts on individual historic structures.
- Interest was expressed in the creation of a second historic district in the area south of the Downtown.
- There is a need to pay more attention to the design of new development in order not to adversely impact the traditional architecture and New England charm of individual properties and areas in Milford.

- It is logical to conclude that with the increase of in-fill development and redevelopment of existing properties projected for the future the potential for impact on historic and architectural resources will exist. Therefore, the need for design policies and standards within the updated Plan and subsequent regulatory revisions becomes an important issue.
- With increasing in-fill development and redevelopment, the potential for mixed-use development with a housing component should be analyzed. This approach may be appropriate for the Downtown and along some of the major road corridors. In addition, an approach to some neighborhood centers may be to strengthen them through such mixed-use development. During the neighborhood meetings many people commented on the lost charm of Milford when there used to be local merchants supported by neighborhood business. An initiative to revitalize these centers should be examined through the Plan update.

STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS HOUSING and PRESERVATION ISSUES

Four (4) concepts to address identified housing and neighborhood issues as part of the Plan of Conservation and Development Update Process as well as subsequent zoning and subdivision regulation changes or revisions are proposed as a strategy.

The concepts to be explored include:

- The development of an In-Fill Development Site Plan Review Process which promotes in-fill development and redevelopment sensitive to physical surroundings and community character.
- Potential designation of Village District(s) to preserve neighborhood and community character and direct new development. Coordinate with historic preservation initiatives.

- Designate areas and promote multi-family housing or mixed-use commercial/residential development in commercial centers, Downtown and along major commercial corridors.
- Within designated portions of Milford Center and Commercial Corridor Design Districts, residential developments with 30% of the units affordable in accordance with Section 8-30g should be added to the Zoning Regulations as Special Permit uses.
- Incorporate “Conservation Design” principles in subdivision design. Conservation Design supports the preservation of land and natural resources, the efficient use of buildable land, and the potential for creating an interconnected network of permanent open space.

With little vacant developable residential land available in the City, housing demand will more likely be met by infill development in existing developed areas. Bulk, height, loss of view and loss of community character were the most cited problems associated with in-fill development in the City.

With little vacant developable residential land available in the City, housing demand will more likely be met by infill development in existing developed areas. During the community input process this topic was often raised especially in regards to the City's shorefront neighborhoods. In most instances smaller old homes or cottages were being purchased, razed and replaced by larger new houses out of keeping with their immediate neighborhood. Bulk, height, loss of view and loss of community character were the most cited problems associated with in-fill development in the City. As development pressures increase these impacts will likely be felt by neighborhoods in other parts of the City affecting neighborhood character and/or impacting historic or architectural resources.

The pressures of in-fill development or redevelopment of structures in desirable neighborhood locations is not unique to Milford. Throughout the country, especially in waterfront locations, such development is taking place. As desirable communities mature and have little land available for new development the need to regulate in-fill and redevelopment is especially pertinent. In Milford the need for regulation in older neighborhoods and in beachfront neighborhoods where summer cottages on small lots have been or are being converted to year-round housing is apparent.

Policies

- ◆ Consider the development of an In-fill Residential Regulation. This could be applied City-wide or in an overlay format. The purpose of such an action would be to ensure that new development, redevelopment and additions occur in a manner which retains the existing character of the surrounding neighborhood and does not encroach on or adversely impact adjacent properties. Some communities have created Development Standards or Guidelines as part of their site plan review process. The

City could require Site Plan Review of all development, over and above the traditional set-back review, in designated areas.

◆ Potential In-Fill Development Design Guidelines could include:

- The house design should fit the scale and character of the surrounding neighborhood.
- The depth of the front yard should be similar to that of adjoining lots to preserve spatial character and vegetation along the street.
- The building mass, side yards and rear yards should respect and relate to those of adjacent lots.
- New homes should not have a detrimental impact on their immediate neighbors in terms of loss of privacy, sunlight or view.
- Existing trees of a designated dimension should be plotted on the site plan. The preservation of significant existing trees and vegetation in keeping with their surroundings should be encouraged.
- The design of the building should de-emphasize the height of the house in relation adjoining properties.
- Site plans must include the location of existing dwellings on abutting properties.

◆ At the topical meetings and the public hearings the issue of development on non-conforming lots was raised. There was a concern that any development that would occur on these pre-existing undersized lots would affect the character of the

surrounding neighborhood. The use of In-fill Development Design Guidelines can be used to address these concerns.

- ◆ In regards to shoreline properties, particular attention should be given to the height and massing of structures. Currently, the Zoning Regulations define building height as measured from the regulatory flood protection elevation. This results in taller buildings than might be allowed in other areas of the City. A modification to this definition or particular attention in the in-fill site plan review should be considered.
- ◆ In order to not create an undue burden on the property owner, the in-fill development site plan review process might be a modification of the normal site plan approval process contained in Section 7 of the Zoning Regulations. The review, circulation and approval of in-fill site plans could be accomplished at the staff level similar to the current procedures for a Planning and Zoning Permit which does not require Board action. There would be an application form which would expand upon the current permit application. The information requested would be to the extent necessary to allow review of the application for compliance with the guidelines listed above.
- ◆ If an overlay district approach is used it should be coordinated with the overlay district approach suggested in the Open Space Element of the Plan of Conservation and Development for natural resource protection. This coordination would involve the establishment of a working committee for review of the application. This committee would include staff from planning and zoning, inland wetlands, engineering, sewer, and health similar to the distribution that is part of the current Site Plan review in Section 7.
- ◆ With the anticipated increase in applications for more intensive use of already developed parcels and in-fill development due to the declining amount of vacant land, the nature and extent of open space buffers and landscaping as part of site plan requirements should be increased.

GOAL: *Use of the Village District Act*

Recently, a new initiative has been added to the State Statutes. Section 8-2j of the Connecticut General Statutes details the establishment and purpose of Village Districts as part of zoning regulations. The Zoning Commission of each municipality may establish village districts as part of its zoning regulations. “Such districts shall be located in areas of distinctive character, landscape or historic value that are specifically identified in the plan of conservation and development. The regulations establishing village districts shall protect the distinctive character, landscape and historic structures within such districts and may regulate new construction, substantial reconstruction and rehabilitation of properties within such district and in view from public roadways, including, but not limited to (1) the design and placement of buildings, (2) the maintenance of public views, (3) the design, paving materials and placement of public roadways, and (4) other elements that the Commission deems appropriate to maintain and protect the character of the village district”.³

In order to create Village Districts and to establish Village Districts as part of Milford’s Zoning Regulations, such Districts must be designated in the Plan of Conservation and Development. The Plan of Conservation and Development must also describe the distinct character and/or unique nature of the district(s) so designated and include specific standards and characteristics to be included within the regulations.

Village Districts can be designated to encompass historic districts or areas, areas with distinctive character and/or vacant land that is contemplated for development. This approach is an appropriate action to preserve community character and protect unique cultural, historic and/or natural resources.

³ Substitute House Bill No. 5177. An Act Concerning Village Districts PA 145, CT General Statutes, Sec.8-2j, effective October 1, 2000.

Policies

Based upon past planning efforts and discussions at the neighborhood meetings and topical workshops, it is suggested that several areas of Milford might be considered for Village District designation. The attached map shows possible locations including the following:

Milford Downtown/Harbor District

Based upon the recent Downtown charrette it might be logical to consider designation for the area of the downtown surrounding the Green. In addition, selected neighborhoods adjacent to the Downtown might be considered for designation as an alternative to or in conjunction with historic district designations.

Woodmont Borough & Bayview

This area contains a unique mix of agricultural, commercial, community facility and residential uses. A Village District designation might be an approach to retain this unique character.

Devon/Walnut Beach

During the neighborhood meetings many people expressed interest in making Devon a combination of a neighborhood shopping area and a specialty retail area with a broader market. A Village District designation might assist in the creation of a distinctive design theme supportive of this type of development.

In order to provide guidance as to the distinct features of each of these districts and the standards for protection of these features to be potentially included in regulations, a detailed study of each district is appropriate. Such a study is nearing completion for the potential Downtown/Harbor District by the Yale University School of Architecture. This study commissioned by Milford Progress, Inc. included an analysis of existing conditions and a series of recommendations for the area. The study was conducted within the framework of a public charrette process which encouraged broad based community participation. It is recommended that upon completion of the report for the Downtown, the Planning and Zoning Board review the

recommendations contained in the report. Following this review, specific standards for the Downtown Village District should be incorporated into the Plan of Conservation and Development. The Planning and Zoning Board would then move forward with the process of adoption of a Village District in accordance with Section 8-2j of the Connecticut General Statutes.

The additional proposed Village Districts should be studied to determine specific distinct characters and future amendments made to the Plan of Conservation and Development to designate such areas as appropriate.

GOAL: *Historic Preservation*

The proposed Downtown/Harbor Village District has a strong relationship to the existing Historic District north of the City Hall. The Historic District Commission has been consulted relative to preservation issues and the concept of the Village District. The Commission supports the Village District concept with the understanding that applicable historic preservation regulations and the Commission enforcement of such regulations will continue in place. In addition, the Historic Commission recommends that the following preservation initiatives be considered:

Policies

- ◆ Develop a list of historic properties in Milford that are outside of the historic district and are not on the National Register. Consider the creation of a “Milford Historic Site” designation. Properties so designated could be given special protection under the development review process.
- ◆ Designate spot historic districts involving single properties or small groups of properties.
- ◆ Preserve historic resources through deed restrictions.
- ◆ Adopt a demolition delay ordinance.
- ◆ Establish a Green District within the Downtown/Harbor Village District based upon the recommendation of the Ad Hoc Mayor’s Committee.
- ◆ Work to establish a historic district for the area south of the Green, particularly the lower end of High Street, Green Street, Lafayette, Street, etc.. Historic designation of the area north of the Green, especially the C.H. Pond mansion (Laurelton Hall) should also be

pursued. Expansion of the existing historic district could accomplish these designations.

- ◆ Consider the creation of a National Register Historic Overlay District, which would include all sites on the National Historic Register and all of the River Park National Historic District. This type of overlay district would protect any property in the district from future residential, commercial or industrial development.
- ◆ Create walking streets in the Downtown/Harbor District inclusive of an historic boulevard along Factory Lane to City Hall as well as the High Street area and around the Green.
- ◆ Restore Memorial Bridge and create a river walk in that area.
- ◆ Consider designating an area within the Downtown/Harbor District as the “Palisades” to include the area within the Line of Palisades as shown on the original Town Plot of Milford.
- ◆ Create and adopt a definition for properties that can be designated as historic and incorporate into applicable regulations. The map entitled Historic Resources shows properties identified by the City Historian as potentially eligible for designation.
- ◆ Adopt regulations creating required buffers around historic homes.

GOAL: *Higher Density, Multi-Family & Mixed Use Developments*

To provide a wider variety of housing types, multi-family housing as part of mixed-use commercial/residential development should be permitted and promoted in and around neighborhood commercial centers, Downtown within walking distance of the train station and along the City's major commercial corridors. There is no undeveloped land zoned and available for multi-family development in the City.

Policies

- ◆ Consider methods to increase and/or encourage controlled multi-family development. Currently the creation of multi-family housing requires a special permit in the Central Business District, Limited Business District, and General Business District in a mixed use building but no more than 50% of the building can be devoted to residential use. Buildings in these districts which are totally residential are currently only permitted by Special Exception which requires a two-thirds (2/3rds) vote of the entire Planning and Zoning Board. Changes in these requirements to allow residential in these districts as total residential development as Special Permit with appropriate design guidelines and site plan review procedures would allow for a pro-active rather than a re-active approach to multi-family development.
- ◆ Options to be considered include the establishment of zoning districts which would provide for controlled-multi-family development in certain specified areas; permitting apartments over stores in certain locations; and the promotion of mixed-use or higher density rental along the major commercial corridors and in the Downtown.
- ◆ To ensure future development has minimal impact on surrounding land uses, traffic studies should be required from applicants for developments of specific size and/or type.

- ◆ The provision of multi-family and rental opportunities could meet the City's identified need for elderly housing and housing for young adults new to the housing market. Locations that are easily accessible to shopping, the train station and transportation corridors are appropriate for higher density multi-family and rental housing. Such development would also support economic vitality in these areas.
- ◆ The design criteria for these developments would be coordinated with the In-fill Development and Design District regulations in the Zoning Regulations.

GOAL: Conservation Design Principles

Since residential development and open space preservation efforts will be vying for the same pieces of property, more defined methods for obtaining viable open space and creating a network of inter-connecting open space are needed as part of subdivision design.

Throughout the neighborhood workshops and topical meetings the need for pedestrian friendly access between neighborhoods, recreational areas and public facilities was discussed. An inter-connected network of open space could provide a potential circulation system for residents

As described previously, Milford has little vacant land available for new development. Since residential development and open space preservation efforts will be vying for the same pieces of property, more defined methods for obtaining viable open space and creating a network of inter-connecting open space are needed as part of subdivision design. The City does not have the resources with which to acquire all of the remaining vacant land within its boundaries for open space. The use of “Conservation Design” principles will help to achieve open space preservation while at the same time allowing for environmentally sensitive residential development.

Conservation Design Principles can be incorporated into the City’s existing development regulations, the design districts and/or in-fill development guidelines. The guiding principle behind Conservation Design is to protect important open space areas and natural resources and to promote the creation or protection of an inter-connected network of open natural areas, recreation areas, greenways and/or trails.

“Conservation Design rearranges the development on each parcel as it is being planned so that half (or more) of the buildable land is set aside as open space. Without controversial “down zoning” the same number of homes can be built in a less land-consumptive manner, allowing the balance of the property to be permanently protected and added to an interconnected network of community green spaces. This “density neutral” approach provides a fair and equitable way to balance conservation and development objectives.”⁴

Throughout the neighborhood workshops and topical meetings the need for pedestrian friendly access between neighborhoods, recreational areas and public facilities was discussed. An inter-connected network of open space could provide a potential circulation system for residents.

Conservation Design Principles for residential development have a direct tie in with the City’s Open Space Plan. As part of this, key natural resources

⁴ “Growing Greener: Putting Conservation Into Local Codes” Natural Lands Trust, November 1997.

and open space protection areas should be mapped as part of the Plan. The importance of these areas to the community and how they fit within the local open space network are key to the selection of preservation or conservation areas. Zoning and Subdivision Regulations and Standards should be reviewed and revised to ensure appropriate resource protection. With the appropriate regulatory guidelines conservation goals can be achieved in a manner which does not preclude the development rights of property owners.

Policies

- ◆ Develop “Conservation Design” regulations to achieve open space preservation while at the same time allowing for environmentally sensitive residential development.
- ◆ Incorporate Conservation Design Principles into the City’s existing development regulations, any design district regulations and/or in-fill development guidelines. The guiding principle behind Conservation Design is to protect important open space areas and natural resources and to promote the creation or protection of an interconnected network of open natural areas, recreation areas, greenways and/or trails.
- ◆ Although there is little vacant developable land left in the City that would be appropriate for the construction of a large residential development, regulatory revisions could be considered to guide development of any future subdivisions.
- ◆ Conservation Design Principles for residential development have a direct tie in with the City’s Open Space Plan. Key natural resource and open space protection areas should be designated and the importance of these areas to the community and how they fit within the local open space network are key to the selection of preservation or conservation areas.

- ◆ Zoning and Subdivision Regulations and Standards should be reviewed and revised to ensure appropriate resource protection. With the appropriate regulatory guidelines conservation goals can be achieved in a manner which does not preclude the development rights of property owners.

GOAL: *Creative Subdivision Design*

On several occasions during community discussions on the Plan of Conservation and Development Update concerns were raised that existing subdivision regulations result in the creation of subdivisions with little character. With a strong desire to retain the City's community character it was suggested that the subdivision regulations be reviewed and potentially revised to allow for more creative street layout, narrower streets and flexible requirements to support and encourage the retention of trees and vegetation, creative site layout and the promotion of visually appealing subdivision design.

Policies

- ◆ Although there is little vacant developable land left in the City that would be appropriate for the construction of a large residential development, regulatory revisions could be considered to guide development of any future subdivisions.
- ◆ How subdivision and other regulations shape the physical appearance of developments in terms of the preservation of natural vegetation, scenic roads and vistas should be examined with the goal of appropriate revisions to regulations.
- ◆ With a strong desire to retain the City's community character, review and revise the City's existing subdivision regulations to allow for more creative street layout, narrower streets and flexible requirements to support and encourage the retention of trees and vegetation, creative site layout and the promotion of visually appealing subdivision design.

4. BUSINESS CENTERS AND COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS

BACKGROUND

Historically, Milford's settlement pattern has been based upon its framework of natural resource systems and built infrastructure, particularly the transportation network.

Historically, Milford's settlement pattern has been based upon its framework of natural resource systems and built infrastructure, particularly the transportation network. The City's natural resources system includes the Housatonic River, the Long Island Sound and the contributing watercourses leading to the Sound. In the earliest days of Milford, this resulted in settlement around the harbor in Milford Center and along the shoreline. Connection to the region along Route 1, the Boston Post Road, resulted in growth with an east west orientation. East/West corridor growth along the Post Road was further defined with the establishment of the railroad which supported increased development including industrial and distribution uses. The construction of I-95 further established the east-west corridor leading to development which valued access to the interstate system. In addition, several interchanges along I-95 provided connections to segments of Route 1 resulting in more regional development patterns including the retail area north of I-95 and a concentration of automobile dealerships with a regional market draw. The balance of the Route 1 corridor and Route 162 (New Haven Avenue) developed with a mix of uses generally serving the local Milford market. Convenience goods and services are generally located in either free-standing establishments or strip centers within a narrow band of frontage within the corridor.

Milford has two major business centers -- Milford Center and Devon Center -- and two centers of lesser prominence -- Naugatuck Avenue at Walnut Beach and Woodmont Center. The proliferation of retail and service establishments with front door off-street parking located along the Route 1 and Route 162 corridors, combined with increasing use of the automobile for in-town trips has weakened the vitality of Devon Center and to a lesser extent Milford Center.

The central corridor defined by Route 1/Route 162, the railroad and I-95 also defines the residential development pattern in Milford. This central corridor divides two residential areas in terms of age of housing and density. The

Zoning in the commercial corridors has been in place for a number of years and is a mixture of zones, some of which no longer reflect existing and future uses. This is particularly true for the many areas zoned General Industrial (GI).

Throughout the planning process it was brought forth many times and it is generally recognized in the community that many sections of the City's commercial corridors are visually unattractive. Because of this unattractiveness it has been determined that there is a need for higher design standards and overall design control. Traffic management, parking configuration standards and site access control are necessary to guide future development and redevelopment along the City's commercial corridors.

area south of the corridor contains the older established neighborhoods with smaller lots resulting in higher density. This situation is particularly true in the shoreline areas where many neighborhoods were originally developed as summer home communities. The area north of the corridor is the more recently developed area with larger lots and lower density. At the same time, the corridor is common to both areas in that it is the destination of residents for retail goods, services, government and cultural activities, employment and transportation links both rail and highway. This results in significant traffic on local streets leading to the corridor as well as continued pressure for development within the corridor.

Recent development within the corridors has most commonly been in the form of additional retail and service establishments at both the large scale such as Super Stop & Shop Center and at the smaller scale with in-fill new construction or renovation of existing establishments. Automotive uses, car dealerships, restaurants and regional retailers have been the newest uses coming to the Route 1 and Route 162 corridors over the past decade.

Zoning in the corridor has been in place for a number of years and is a mixture of zones, some of which no longer reflect existing and future uses. This is particularly true for the many areas zoned General Industrial (GI). Throughout the planning process it was brought forth many times and it is generally recognized in the community that many sections of the City's commercial corridors are visually unattractive. Because of this unattractiveness it has been determined that there is a need for higher design standards and overall design control. Traffic management, parking configuration standards and site access control are also necessary to guide future development and redevelopment along the City's commercial corridors.

The City's Route 1/Route 162 Corridor contains several distinct areas defined by land usage, location, interstate access and/or function. Each of these areas has a unique, but interconnected function in the overall environment and character that defines the Milford economy. In order to guide development within the corridor over the next ten years and beyond, it is necessary to define the function of the various areas that comprise the corridor and propose appropriate land use and design controls for each of

the areas. Such controls will consider impacts upon natural resources as well as adjacent neighborhoods.

For planning purposes the City's business corridors have been segmented into five distinct areas and two transitional areas. Each of these areas possess characteristics and/or serve specific economic development functions which differentiate them from each other. The commercial corridor areas are as follows:

- Devon Center/Naugatuck Avenue/Walnut Beach Corridor, which includes Bridgeport Avenue from the Milford/Stratford town line to I-95, Exit 34 as well as Naugatuck Avenue between Bridgeport Avenue and Walnut Beach;
- Bridgeport Avenue Corridor from I-95, Exit 34 to the Rte. 1/Rte. 162 split;
- Boston Post Road from Bridgeport Avenue to I-95, Exit 39 (This area also includes a small portion of Cherry Street from its intersection with Route 1 to Old Buckingham Avenue);
- Boston Post Road from I-95, Exit 39 to the Milford/Orange town line; and
- New Haven Avenue from Buckingham Avenue to Pepe's Farm Road.

The City also has two transition areas from both the Bridgeport Avenue commercial corridor and the New Haven Avenue commercial corridor into Downtown and Milford Center. These areas can be generally defined as the corridors between the Route 1/Route 162 split to Milford Hospital as the western gateway/transitional area and from Gulf Street to Buckingham Avenue as the eastern gateway/transitional area. Although Milford Center also has gateways from the north along North Street, from the northwest along High Street and from the northeast along Cherry Street these areas are addressed in the Milford Center Plan and not included as part of the commercial corridor plan.

The following narrative describes each of the segments of the corridor in terms of its present uses and function as well proposed treatment. The

Business Corridor Map shows the city's various corridor areas as delineated above.

Due to its size and site limitations, Devon Center will never have the site massing or mix of uses necessary to compete with the regional uses along the City's Route 1 corridor further to the east or Bridgeport/Barnum Avenue in Stratford. Its future focus should be to retain and attract a mix of uses to serve the immediately surrounding neighborhoods and to develop a specific market niche through the attraction of unique goods or services.

Streetscape improvements and development design standards which improve the overall appearance of the corridor and encourage development in keeping with the scale of the surrounding uses should be developed and implemented to unify the area.

Devon Center/Naugatuck Avenue/Walnut Beach Corridor

The Devon Center portion of this area extends from the Milford/Stratford town line along Bridgeport Avenue to the I-95, Exit 34 interchange. As a commercial center developed before the proliferation of the automobile, the Bridgeport Avenue right-of-way in this section is narrow and most of the commercial buildings are sited on small lots with little or no off-street parking. The lots fronting on Bridgeport Avenue are also narrow with limited set-back. Such site limitations are not in keeping with today's development needs and standards. Any major development activity will require site assembly.

In order to accommodate any significant redevelopment in this area it will be necessary to increase the depth of the commercial zone in key areas to allow for off-street parking and in-fill development in keeping with current construction trends. Because the Devon Center commercial area is of a walkable scale it is not necessary to provide off-street parking on every site.

Shared public parking in a central or near central location could also meet the parking needs of business establishments.

Due to its size and site limitations, Devon Center will never have the site massing or mix of uses necessary to compete with the regional uses along the City's Route 1 corridor further to the east or Bridgeport/Barnum Avenue in Stratford. Its future focus should be to retain and attract a mix of uses to serve the immediately surrounding neighborhoods and to develop a specific market niche through the attraction of unique goods or services. Limited in-fill residential development should be encouraged in edge areas and on sites capable of accommodating multiple family development at a density compatible with the existing neighborhood. Such development would not only expand the customer base for local merchants but would also provide an alternative to small-scale strip commercial development with potentially marginal consumer draw.

Streetscape improvements and development design standards which improve the overall appearance of the corridor and encourage development

There is currently no consistency in design along Naugatuck Avenue and no true land use or commercial nodes. Development nodes of clustered commercial uses incorporating streetscape design elements would serve to unify the corridor. Streetscape improvements, which include the screening of automotive uses, and unifying design elements are key to providing a distinctive character and appearance to this area.

Development nodes of clustered commercial uses incorporating streetscape design elements would serve to unify the corridor. Such commercial nodes should be encouraged at key locations along the corridor while infill residential development should be encouraged as unused and underutilized sites are redeveloped and/or reconfigured.

in keeping with the scale of the surrounding uses should be developed and implemented to unify the area. Coordinated implementation of the streetscape improvement plan developed for Devon Center is one of the primary implementation steps for this area.

Naugatuck Avenue forms a north-south corridor running between Devon, the Walnut Beach Redevelopment Area and the shoreline. Naugatuck Avenue contains a mix of commercial, industrial, civic, institutional and residential uses. Residential properties comprise a significant portion of the properties along the corridor. The current commercial uses along Naugatuck Avenue are marginal, with the majority being convenience commercial, small office uses or automotive related uses. There is currently no consistency in design along Naugatuck Avenue and no true land use or commercial nodes. Development nodes of clustered commercial uses incorporating streetscape design elements would serve to unify the corridor.

Such commercial nodes should be encouraged at key locations along the corridor while infill residential development should be encouraged as unused and underutilized sites are redeveloped and/or reconfigured. Based upon the type of commercial uses in existence and the number of vacancies along Naugatuck Avenue, reduction of commercial square footage at marginal locations would be in keeping with market demand. Streetscape improvements, which include the screening of automotive uses, and unifying design elements are key to providing a distinctive character and appearance to this area. Development design standards to ensure infill development is in keeping with its surroundings and sensitive to environmental constraints and infrastructure capacity will be developed as part of zoning revisions to guide future development activity.

In the Spring of 2001 the Sewer Commission expanded sewer capacity in the Devon/Naugatuck Avenue area. The expanded sewer capacity area encompasses the frontage along Bridgeport Avenue and Naugatuck Avenue. This expanded capacity supports the development of multi-family infill housing within these areas.

The Walnut Beach Redevelopment Area defines the southern end of Naugatuck Avenue. The shopping center developed as part of the overall redevelopment plan is underutilized and calls for increased usage and

The Walnut Beach Redevelopment Area defines the southern end of Naugatuck Avenue. The shopping center developed as part of the overall redevelopment plan is underutilized and calls for increased usage and improvement. Reuse of the site to accommodate multi-family housing is recommended. The creation of destination shopping wherein a unique mix of goods and services are offered would also be appropriate for this area. Its location near the shore offers an opportunity for small scale commercial enterprises, such as restaurants, boutiques or galleries which capitalize on the location.

improvement. With the proliferation of commercial establishments along Route 1, the need for major retail commercial in the Walnut Beach area is minimal. Reuse of the site to accommodate a mix of commercial and multi-family housing is recommended. The need for some retail, such as limited grocery and convenience shopping to support the high concentration of multi-family units in the area (many of which are occupied by elderly households) remains. The creation of destination shopping wherein a unique mix of goods and services are offered would also be appropriate for this area. Its location near the shore offers an opportunity for small scale commercial enterprises, such as restaurants, boutiques or galleries which capitalize on the location. The concept of creating an “artists” environment has been discussed as a marketing alternative for this area. Such a use would be in keeping with the scale of the lower Naugatuck Avenue/Broadway/Monroe Street area.

The future vision for the Walnut Beach Shopping Center is for mixed-use development with the potential for multi-family as part of the overall development consistent with the revitalization plan for the area.

Route 1 Corridor

As described above, the Route 1 Corridor can be divided into several segments based upon land use patterns and function within Milford and the region. The following describes each segment.

- Bridgeport Avenue Corridor from I-95, Exit 34 to the Rte. 1/Rte. 162 split;
- Boston Post Road from Bridgeport Avenue to I-95, Exit 39 (This area also includes a small portion of Cherry Street from its intersection with Route 1 to Old Buckingham Avenue);
- Boston Post Road from I-95, Exit 39 to the Milford/Orange town line; and

Bridgeport Avenue Corridor

This segment of the corridor is bordered by the Exit 34 ramp of I-95 on the west and the intersection of the Boston Post Road (Rte. 1) and Bridgeport Avenue (Rte. 162) on the east. There are some highway related uses such

Because much of the land area in the City has already been developed, much of the future focus of new development activity in the City will be on infill development, reclamation, reuse or adapted reuse of previously developed property.

as McDonalds and some older motels in the vicinity of the Exit 34 ramp. Land area around interstate interchanges is scarce in Connecticut. Interchange related development and uses which value direct access to the interstate highway system value such locations. The configuration of the exit ramp and the shallow depth of parcels in the immediate vicinity of the exit make the parcels in this segment of Route 1 less desirable for regional draw as compared to other I-95 interchanges in the City. The most prevalent land use in this segment of Route 1 is the series of automotive dealerships that comprise "automobile row". This area also contains two (2) major new retail sites the K-Mart Plaza and the Super Stop & Shop Plaza. Both of these establishments represent recent property reuse projects. The K-Mart development adapted existing retail structures while the Stop & Shop development reclaimed a previously developed site. Because much of the land area in the City has already been developed, much of the future focus of new development activity in the City will be on infill development, reclamation, reuse or adapted reuse of previously developed property.

This portion of the Route 1 corridor contains a significant natural resource on the northern side of Bridgeport Avenue. This property, known as Milford Reservoir, and its adjacent wetlands represent an area of environmental concern. Any development or redevelopment which occurs in and around this area must be designed in a manner that does not negatively impact upon the reservoirs, adjacent wetlands and associated watercourses. The protection of these natural resources and the provision of a protective greenway along the watercourses which empty into the Long Island Sound should guide land use planning decisions.

The focus of this area should be to sustain and improve upon its current regional/community-wide market. The concentration of automotive retailers in this location and the major community-wide retail destinations such as K-Mart and Stop & Shop define this section of Route 1/Bridgeport Avenue.

The proliferation of automotive uses and older commercial development along this segment of Route 1 has an unorderedly, unattractive appearance. Signage of all shapes, sizes and locations; inconsistent set backs; and limited buffering results in visual chaos and an unattractive appearance as illustrated in the following photographs.



Problems with Poor Signage Control



Problems with Buffering & Set-Backs

To improve the appearance of this area streetscape improvements including landscaping, plantings, berms and signage improvements are needed. Design guidelines that incorporate these elements into site planning for new development and methods to encourage such improvements throughout the entire corridor should be developed and implemented. Access management is also key to commercial corridor success. An access management plan to reduce the number of curb cuts and left hand turns should be prepared to address traffic and vehicular movements along the corridor. Such a plan should be revisited and revised pending major new development or redevelopment activity.

Bridgeport Avenue Transition Area Into Milford Center

Bridgeport Avenue splits at the intersection of Routes 1 and 162. At this point, Bridgeport Avenue continues eastward as Route 162 toward Milford Center. This stretch of Bridgeport Avenue serves as a gateway to Milford Center. Milford Hospital is a key destination in this transition area. Recent trends in medical care and the expansion of services at Milford Hospital have led to increased pressure for medical office space and support services. The Bridgeport Avenue Transition Zone would be a natural location for such medical and support uses. As a Gateway into Milford Center, design standards to ensure that physical design, landscaping and site layout are consistent with signage and streetscape treatments in and around Milford Center should be developed and implemented.

Boston Post Road Western Corridor

This segment of the Post Road extends from the intersection with Bridgeport Avenue on the west to the intersection with Cherry Street on the

east. This portion of Route 1 has no specific or unique identity. At the eastern end of the segment in proximity to Connecticut Post Mall there are some highway related uses including older motels, restaurants and gas stations. At the center portion of this corridor area is the on and off ramp system for the Milford Parkway connector to Route 15, the Merritt/Wilbur Cross Parkway, which further supports some auto related uses. The balance of this corridor segment contains a mixture of uses ranging from community facilities such as the Milford Police Department and Public Works Department Complex to restaurants and smaller convenience/service establishments. Although this corridor contains some destination uses including Colonial Toyota, Gloria's Garden Shop and Expect Discounts, they do not represent a unifying presence.

There are several properties in this area suitable for redevelopment or future reuse. Portions of this corridor segment have sufficient depth to allow for redevelopment in keeping with modern parking and site planning standards. Community oriented development would be the most desirable use for this area. A Community Design District that incorporates a mix of commercial development and streetscape design improvements is recommended for this area. Because the area has sites suitable for redevelopment, vehicular access to both I-95 and Route 15 and access to mass transportation, residential infill development along this corridor would be appropriate.



Site with Development Potential



Site with Development Potential

The City currently allows residential uses in commercial areas as part of mixed-use developments. It is recommended that residential development

be permitted without requiring a mix of commercial or office use as part of the development. Development of parcels along this corridor for residential use is in keeping with development trends and would help to address traffic congestion issues. Generally residential peak traffic is not at the same time as commercial peak traffic offsetting peak hour traffic patterns in this segment of the corridor. The reduction of small service and retail square footage would also benefit the corridor. These small establishments often result in multiple vehicular entries and exits in a busy transportation corridor. Left hand turns in areas without signalization are also problematic along the entire Route 1 corridor. By allowing residential development in this area only if it is a part of a mixed use development will only result in a proliferation of more small retail and office space. Recent mixed residential and commercial developments constructed in Milford have illustrated this phenomenon. In recent developments the housing components have rented or leased at a much faster rate than the ground level retail. Commercial vacancies and/or the overabundance of personal service establishments in these developments are common. Because of this, well designed and sited residential development would be more desirable than the mixed-use developments required by current zoning.



Example of In-Fill Residential Development



Example of In-Fill Residential Development

Access management planning and the development and implementation of design guidelines and standards will be necessary to ensure integration of commercial and residential uses. Site design guidelines, landscaping and streetscape improvements, parking standards and access management design elements will be incorporated into the “design district” guidelines for this area.

This segment of the Route 1 corridor also serves as a gateway to Milford Center from the north. Entry points into Milford Center include Cherry Street, River Street, North Street, High Street and Clark Street. All of these streets intersect with Route 1. The Milford Historic District is also located between Route 1 and Milford Center in this central portion of the city. The relationship of this segment of the corridor to the adjacent neighborhoods and its gateway position to Milford Center are important considerations in future planning for the area.

Post Road Regional Commercial Area

The easternmost segment of the Route 1 corridor north of I-95 and abutting Orange is clearly established as a regional commercial area. Connecticut Post Mall and numerous national retailers make this area a destination within the region. The direct access to I-95 at interchange 39 enhances this regional position. In addition, significant retail development along Route 1 in the Town of Orange to the east of Milford further supports this area's regional market position. The future land use policy for this area should be to strengthen its regional development focus and to promote a mix of goods, services and amenities to continue its strong market draw. To alleviate traffic congestion along Route 1 and its impacts on surrounding streets an access management plan should be prepared and necessary traffic, roadway and site configuration improvements should be implemented. Traffic and access problems in this area were discussed often during the public meetings held at the onset of this Plan of Conservation and Development Update process. In addition to the topic of traffic and congestion, the overall unattractive appearance of the Route 1 corridor was also discussed often. Because of its regional draw, this commercial area defines the City's image to many visitors to Milford. To address this concern and to improve the image of the area, zoning site development standards should be upgraded to improve site and streetscape appearance. Landscaping, the extent of impervious surfaces, parking layout, the siting of structures and the location of site entrances and exits shall all be addressed as part of the new site development standards.

New Haven Avenue Commercial Corridor

The New Haven Avenue Commercial Corridor extends from just east of Milford Center at Gulf Street to the more industrial areas at the intersection of Pepe's Farm Road. This area contains a mixture of uses including office, automotive repair, restaurants, commercial strip development, industrial and residential. The corridor is defined by a fairly narrow strip of land located between the existing railroad line and the shore. The narrow frontage in this area and the constraints presented by the railroad and the natural shoreline features limit the extent of development which can occur on individual parcels along the corridor.

Within the corridor there is a significant natural resource area at the Indian River outlet into Gulf Pond. There are currently several automotive repair and industrial uses in the vicinity of this important natural resource area. Because of the potential impact on adjacent coastal resources there is a need for specific development controls in this area. In addition to the protection of natural resources and this area of critical concern there is a need to improve the overall image of the area. Zoning site development standards should be upgraded to monitor development to ensure the protection of resources as well as improve site and streetscape appearance. Landscaping, berms and buffers, the extent of impervious surfaces, parking layout, the siting of structures, signage and the location of site entrances and exits shall all be addressed as part of the new site development standards.

In-fill multi-family housing should be permitted in those areas of the corridor with the infrastructure and land area to support such uses. In-fill housing currently exists along the south side of this corridor segment. New Haven Avenue serves as the eastern Gateway to Milford Center. In this area, transitional uses including higher density housing which would benefit from proximity to the train station is recommended. Gateway design treatments and design standards to ensure that physical design, landscaping and site layout are consistent with signage and streetscape treatments in and around Milford Center shall be developed and implemented.

GOALS and POLICIES TO GUIDE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT and LAND USE DECISIONS

The following goals and policies have been developed to guide future development and land use activity along the City's commercial corridors. These goals and policies, along with narrative description of the various corridor segments, will be incorporated into the final Plan of Conservation and Development.

GOAL: *Promote the Unique Identity and Function of the Various Segments of the City's Commercial Corridors*

Policies

- ◆ The City has several commercial corridor segments that fulfill a unique and/or specific function within the community and the region. To promote sound development patterns in the corridors, the centralization of uses such as automotive dealerships, regional commercial establishments, arts and antiques galleries, interchange dependent and hospital and medical related uses should be encouraged consistent with existing development trends.
- ◆ Permit residential multi-family development on appropriate sites along the Bridgeport Avenue, Boston Post Road and New Haven Avenue corridors. Residential development on sites which meet development design standards and which have access to mass transportation should be encouraged along the City's commercial corridors. Mixed use development may be appropriate depending upon the nature of the site but should not be a requirement for residential development.
- ◆ One hundred percent (100%) residential multi-family development along the City's business corridors would require a Special Permit. Site plan review to ensure such developments were in keeping with surrounding

land usage, access and traffic circulation would be required prior to the granting of Special Permit. Residential uses not within mixed use buildings would be required to have 30% of the units affordable in accordance with Section 8-30g of the State Statutes.

- ◆ Important natural resource areas within the corridors should be protected and enhanced as part of revised site development controls.
- ◆ Adopt zoning revisions for the corridors which simplify the number of existing zoning designations and are performance based rather than use based.

GOAL: ***Improve Image and Streetscape Appearance of the City's Commercial Corridors***

Policies

- ◆ Address corridor image through the revision and enhancement of zoning and site development standards.
- ◆ To improve streetscape appearance, signage; landscaping; site coverage and impervious surfaces; parking layout; the appearance and siting of structures; and the location and quantity of entrances and exits shall be regulated by revised site development standards and the enforcement of design controls.
- ◆ Provide streetscape improvements to define “gateways” into Milford Center and Downtown. Signage and physical streetscape improvements should be made in the transition areas along Bridgeport Avenue and New Haven Avenue into Milford Center, along Cherry Street and in the vicinity of Boston Post Road and North Street.

GOAL: *Provide for Safe and Efficient Movement of Vehicular Traffic*

Policies

- ◆ Develop and implement access management plans for the various segments of the Route 1/Boston Post Road Corridor to control the location and quantity of entrances and exits into and out of developments.
- ◆ Implement a cooperative development review process with the police department, the engineering department; the planning department and the Connecticut Department of Transportation to ensure that traffic and access management concerns are addressed.
- ◆ Encourage and support roadway improvements which allow for left turn lanes and/or improved signalization in key locations along the Bridgeport Avenue, Boston Post Road and New Haven Avenue corridors.
- ◆ Include traffic impact studies as part of the development review process.
- ◆ To ensure future development has minimal impact on surrounding land uses, traffic studies should be required from applicants for developments of specific size and/or type. Such studies should be reviewed by the Milford Traffic Authority and the Planning and Zoning Board.

CORRIDOR PLANNING, DESIGN and REGULATORY ACTIVITIES

Corridor-specific plans and special land use controls designed to enhance the overall appearance, function and character of a particular area respond to uncoordinated, insensitive and/or piecemeal development. Not only do such plans and regulations maintain or bring order to an otherwise uncoordinated streetscape they can also serve to create a specific unifying character or sense of place.

Commercial corridor planning and development design regulations begin to address problems which have developed gradually over many years on a piecemeal basis. In recent years many communities have begun to address their desire for aesthetically pleasing and functional commercial corridors. Increased development activity, uncoordinated development, clashes between adjacent land uses and unbearable traffic are all potential triggers for rethinking corridor planning and design. Uncontrolled development within roadway corridors has greatly attributed to undesirable and nonfunctional traffic movements, patterns and levels. Corridor-specific plans and special land use controls designed to enhance the overall appearance, function and character of a particular area respond to uncoordinated, insensitive and/or piecemeal development. Not only do such plans and regulations maintain or bring order to an otherwise uncoordinated streetscape they can also serve to create a specific unifying character or sense of place.

Recent corridor plans and regulations recognize that the appearance and function of a commercial corridor is shaped by its land usage, roadway design, location and surrounding built and natural environment. Such plans and regulations merge traffic engineering, transportation planning, urban design and land use planning strategies into integrated design guidelines. In Milford, environmental concerns, the desire to maintain and/or restore its unique community character and the limited availability of undeveloped land will also be important components in the development and implementation of corridor design. A balance between aesthetics, community image and economic development is key to the success of the City's commercial corridor planning.

There are several characteristics that typify the "common commercial corridor:

- Numerous large freestanding and portable signs;
- Large expanses of unscreened surface parking;
- Little or no landscaping of public or private property;
- Few or no pedestrian improvements;

- Above ground utilities and overhead lights;
- Numerous poorly delineated and closely spaced driveway access points; and
- A generally uncoordinated approach to the design, location and planning of various public and private improvements.”⁵

Milford’s commercial corridors, like most commercial corridors, have both visual and functional problem areas. Visually, most of the corridors lack coordination or a unified character; possess large expanses of impervious surfaces; contain numerous signs of various sizes, heights and types; and lack a general sense of place. A multitude of curb cuts, site access, poor directional signage and traffic congestion are the major functional problems of the city’s commercial corridors. To address these problems, new development and redevelopment along the City’s commercial corridors should respect the existing natural and built environment and bear some relationship to the city’s identity and character.



Example of Poor Signage



Example of Poor Signage



Example of Poor Landscaping



Example of Poor Landscaping & Set-Backs



Example of Good Landscaping & Buffering



Example of Good Landscaping & Set-Back

Changes in the City's zoning regulations and the development of commercial corridor design districts will serve to promote continuity and coordination in the design and siting of commercial development along the City's major roadways.

Changes in the City's zoning regulations and the development of commercial corridor design districts will serve to promote continuity and coordination in the design and siting of commercial development along the City's major roadways. The following measures shall be incorporated into the zoning regulations in order to create more attractive, coordinated and safe corridor environments.

- Reduce the number of curb cuts.
- Address left turn movements at key locations.
- Prepare access management plans for each of the commercial corridor segments in the City. Depending upon the density of development plans for sub-segments of certain corridors may be necessary. New developments should be required to prepare access management plans for incorporation onto the overall corridor management plan.
- Reduce the amount and location of impervious surfaces.
- Develop landscaping standards to unify appearance and visually improve properties along the corridors.
- Limit the size, height, location and type of new and replacement signs.
- Develop an integrated sign design scheme for specific corridor segments.
- Develop lighting standards and streetscape improvement standards to provide unified appearance in specific corridor segments.
- Encourage development design in keeping with and in proportion to adjacent or nearby properties.

⁵ Kirk R. Bishop, Designing Urban Corridors, Planning Advisory Service Report Number 418 (Chicago: American Planning Association, 1989), 5-6.

- Develop locational and directional signage and gateway physical improvements to denote entry into the City as well as entry into Milford Center.
- Develop entryways which convey sense of place and convey local community identity.
- Entryways should serve as directional and informational points of reference and should improve first impressions of the City.
- Develop a series of directional and informational signage to improve traffic flow and indicate locations of importance such as public parking, entrances, the train station and other areas of interest.
- Shield off-street parking areas from view with the use of landscaping, screening, berms, and/or buffering.
- Use landscaping to soften the visual effects of surface parking.
- Encourage tree plantings and landscape features commensurate to the size and quantity of surface parking.
- Limit the amount of unnecessary impervious surfaces through landscaping. This will serve to reduce the quantity and improve the quality of stormwater runoff.
- Develop stricter standards for the screening and buffering of automotive dealerships and repair uses. Develop screening standards for vehicle storage and develop limits on the number and spacing of vehicles displayed along road frontage.
- Develop building design guidelines to encourage specific types of development at key locations. Such locations could include entryways and gateways into Milford Center or the City and/or commercial strips with unique scale, location, function or history.
- Prepare streetscape treatment and design plans for each of the City's unique corridor segments. Plans should focus on the unique function, location and physical attributes of each segment and should address signage, pavement treatments, lighting, traffic improvements, roadway improvements, signalization, parking and the type and placement of streetscape furniture as appropriate for the location.

RECOMMENDATIONS for CORRIDOR DESIGN DISTRICTS

It is recommended, as part of the Plan of Conservation and Development, that the various segments of the City's commercial corridors be divided into separate "Design Districts". These individual design districts will allow for the creation and implementation of design and development standards that address the unique circumstances and characteristics of the various corridor segments. Although most of the design and development standards will be similar in all districts, the following Land Use Plan designations are proposed for the various corridor segments. Each of these Design Districts will have additional requirements and/or standards which address their unique location, function and/or physical or environmental features. The proposed Design Districts and their general locations are as follows:

- **Devon Design District** – Bridgeport Avenue from the Stratford/Milford municipal boundary to the Exit 34 interchange with I-95.
- **Naugatuck Avenue/Walnut Beach Design District** – Naugatuck Avenue north of Bridgeport Avenue to Cottage Street and south of Bridgeport Avenue to Walnut Beach and the Walnut Beach Redevelopment Area. This district will also include portions of Broadway at its intersection with Naugatuck Avenue.
- **Commercial Corridor Design District(s)** – Within this category there are two sub-categories of design districts (Bridgeport Avenue and New Haven Avenue) as well as two transitional areas adjacent to Milford Center as shown on the Proposed Commercial corridor Districts map. The general limits of these areas include Bridgeport Avenue from the Exit 34 interchange with I-95 to the Route 1/Route 162 split and New Haven Avenue from Milford Center to Pepe's Farm Road. Each of these areas also serves as an entryway into Milford Center. For these entryways, Transitional Areas are suggested which serve as functional and physical gateways into the heart of the City. Signage, streetscape design treatment and land

usage which provide a link between corridor commercial functions and the downtown, civic and historical center of the city should occur in these areas.

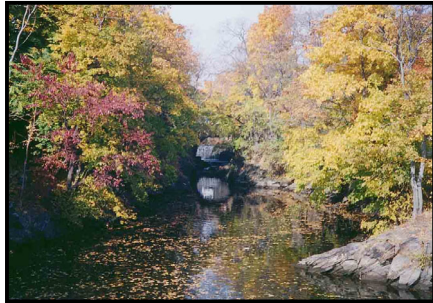
- **Community Design District** – This Design District area is proposed for the segment of Route 1/Boston Post Road between the Route 1/Route 162 split and the Exit 39 interchange with I-95 at Route 1 and Cherry Street.
- **Regional Commercial Design District** – The Regional Commercial Design District will encompass the segment of Route 1 between the Exit 39 interchange with I-95 eastward to the Town of Orange. Standards and regulations will address the issues associated with regional draw commercial enterprises and their traffic and development implications.

5. MILFORD CENTER PLAN

INTRODUCTION



Duck Pond & City Hall



*Wepawaug Viewed from
Footbridge*



*Similar View of Wepawaug
circa 1890*

Milford Center is the historic center of the community dating back to the original Town Plot with its Line of Palisades as shown on a plan dating to 1646. In its earliest years, the form of the Center around the Green, Harbor and Wepawaug River had already taken shape. Today, Milford Center retains a mix of built environment and natural assets which is unique. Recently, the Yale Urban Design Workshop working with Milford Progress, Inc. prepared a Plan for Downtown Milford which best describes the Center's unique assets and the goal for the future as follows:

"In addition to the fundamental quality and inherent charm of the Green itself, no other town that we know of has combined assets of the Green with retail and business center, train station, Harbor, river, "Duck Pond" and Government Center, in such immediate and dramatic proximity to one another. This weaving together of attractive open space, historic architecture, and the economic and institutional engines that both symbolize and drive the life of the community, is the unique and irreplaceable framework for Downtown development. It is the primary goal of this Plan to protect, enhance and take full advantage of that fundamental armature that shapes Milford's center."

Throughout the planning for Milford Center, it has become apparent that the area is fundamentally sound in terms of both physical form and function as the center of Milford. The successful Head of the Harbor project has strengthened the linkage between the Harbor and the Green. There are private investments taking place which are bringing new vitality to the area. With this investment, issues such as parking availability, traffic circulation, pedestrian linkages, design quality and the potential for overdevelopment have become part of the public dialogue. The approach to the future of Milford Center presented in this plan element is based upon the



Milford Harbor



The Green



*Adaptive Reuse Office on
the Green*



*Adaptive Reuse Office on
the Green*

management of resources to protect the fabric of the Downtown which is uniquely Milford. The management of resources will support continued investment in the area consistent with the community vision for Milford Center.

DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

Milford Center is more than the concentration of retail and business uses clustered around the Green. While this cluster of uses comprises the traditional “downtown” portion of Milford Center, the residential neighborhoods and the harbor are also extensions of Milford Center in terms of physical linkages as well as social and economic interaction.

The Building Use Map shows current development patterns in Milford Center. Not surprisingly, the Center is characterized by several activity clusters which define the area and create a series of physical and functional relationships. As the linear heart of the Center, the Green both separates activity clusters and provides a visual and pedestrian link. However, with the current traffic pattern, the Green channels traffic in an east-west direction and discourages south to north movement. In terms of land use, development along the north side of the Green, North Broad Street, is predominately office with several law firms and banks. The adaptive re-use of several fine buildings in the area creates an attractive cluster of properties. The strength of this area as an office cluster is supported by its proximity to the railroad station as well as the court and municipal complex to the north. At the western end of the Green the uses begin to transition into a mix of residential and office uses as well as some convenience retail. As one moves further to the west towards Route 1, the uses become more mixed and transitions to the cacophony of uses which is Route 1.

The south side of the Green, with development along South Broad Street, presents a contrast to the North Broad Street area. The mixing of uses is much greater and is defined at each end by distinctive land uses. At the



South Broad Frontage



Entrance to Armory Square



***Under Utilized Building on
Factory Lane/South Broad***



***View Toward Factory Lane/
South Broad circa 1949***

western end, Milford Hospital and related medical office create a strong physical landmark as well as a destination. As one moves easterly along South Broad Street, there is a mix of uses including residential, church and offices which is much less uniform than the North Broad frontage. There is also a stronger functional and physical relationship with the residential neighborhood to the south. This relationship does not exist on North Broad Street due to presence of the railroad tracks. As one approaches High Street, the retail cluster emerges leading to the major intersection with River Street at the end of the Green. This retail cluster continues north on River Street along the Wepawaug River to the government and institutional cluster.

If one continues east on New Haven Avenue across the Wepawaug there is a mixture of municipal uses (fire station and library), offices, retail and residential. Milford Academy at Gulf Street forms a transition to a primarily residential area on the south side of New Haven Avenue. The north side of New Haven Avenue to Buckingham Avenue has no defining land use pattern. A zone change to permit the conversion of a former industrial site to condominiums has recently been approved by the Planning and Zoning Board. This is the type of project which can begin to redefine this area.

Since the adoption of the 1972 Plan of Development, a dramatic change has occurred both physically and functionally in the relationship between the traditional center around the Green and the Harbor. The Head of the Harbor project has increased the vitality of the area and created an attractive pedestrian scale area at Harbor Landing. The pedestrian bridge connecting with Fowler Field has improved access to this area for recreation, the library, community functions and railroad commuter parking. From a business standpoint a busier Milford Harbor has brought people to the area as either boaters or those who enjoy walking the Harbor and admiring the boats.

Most recently, the approval of Schooner Wharf as a mixed use residential/retail development has implemented a proposal of the 1972 Plan of Development. This development creates the visual and functional linkage between the Harbor and the concentration of retail activity at the River Street/Broad Street intersection. The mixed use nature of this development builds on the strengths of proximity to the train station, dining and shopping,



***River Street/New Haven
Avenue Corner***



***River Street/New Haven Avenue
Corner circa 1949***

***Future development in
Milford Center should
recognize the
importance of the
residential
neighborhoods as a
customer base while
protecting the
neighborhoods from
negative impact.***

the library and recreation activities close by at Fowler Field, as well as visual and physical access to the Harbor. These strengths are particularly supportive of the residential component of the development.

The portion of Milford Center described above comprises the traditional “downtown” portion of the Center where goods and services are available. It is this area which also serves as the government and civic center of the community. Of equal importance in shaping the character of Milford Center are the residential neighborhoods surrounding the downtown. The neighborhood to the north including the Historic District is both an attractive residential area and a gateway to the downtown. Much of the area is within walking distance and provides a customer base for the downtown. The neighborhood to the south is also an attractive residential area which links the downtown with the harbor and shoreline areas. While not a vehicular gateway, as is the case with the neighborhood to the north, this neighborhood is much closer to the business center of the downtown. This proximity increases the potential for “walk to” business from residents of this neighborhood. At the same time, the impact of activity in the downtown on a day to day basis is greater on this area than the neighborhood to the north.

Future development in Milford Center should recognize the importance of the residential neighborhoods as a customer base while protecting the neighborhoods from negative impact.

Milford Center As A Place

In recent years there has been extensive dialogue in the planning field concerning neo-traditional communities and traditional neighborhood development. One of the central themes of this dialogue is “place making” or creating a vibrant and successful community center. A recent publication of the Urban Land Institute lists the eight essential elements of place making as follows:

<i>Element</i>	<i>Example</i>
Composition of physical form(s)	The French Quarter in New Orleans is a unique and memorable urban district by virtue of its intensity of use and density, spatial order, distinctive architectural continuity, and clearly defined edges and entrances. Reston Town Center in Reston, Virginia, through its physical configuration featuring a traditional main street, plaza, and fountain, has created a memorable place of distinction.
Distinctive open spaces	Memorable cities possess great public spaces, for example, Boston's Public Garden, London's Piccadilly Circus, and New York streets such as Fifth Avenue.
Pedestrian scale and connectivity	It is reasonable to expect pedestrians to walk distances of up to four blocks (1,600 feet) depending on climate and the quality of the pedestrian environment. Despite the dominance of the automobile and the Internet, the physical and social characteristics of people and their interest in walking, gathering, celebrating, and eating have not changed significantly in our contemporary society.
Access	Suburban business districts grew as a consequence of location, highway access, and ease of parking. These factors represent the underlying requirements for the economic feasibility of suburban business districts and are principal elements in the perception of the quality of modern places. Desirable places can surmount poor or weak vehicular circulation and limited parking.
Mixed land uses	Memorable urban environments and the perception of place are characterized by intense pedestrian activity in attractive settings for the better part of the day and evening. Historic centers such as Boston, with its in-town residential neighborhoods, and new business centers such as Reston Town Center, which has introduced housing within its center, are highly regarded places. While planners and designers can create the stage or framework for place, only mixed land uses, including residential uses, will bring the actors to the stage on a 24-hour/seven-day basis.
Landscape environment	Climate, topography, water, and plants play important roles in the creation of place. The late James Rouse, developer of Columbia and the festival markets, found through his experience that 'people seek beauty and delight' Alan Ward, author of <i>American Designed Landscapes</i> , suggests that "... elements of the natural environment, including climate and landscape, are a powerful part of place" and that "... meaningful landscapes are narrative and tell you about place." ¹
Connectivity to adjoining neighborhoods	Connections to adjoining neighborhoods can lend strength to a suburban business district by drawing on the attributes of neighboring businesses and residents.
Partnership	The creation of place in suburban business districts requires a partnership between the public and private sectors. Both CityPlace in West Palm Beach and downtown San Diego brought together the expertise and financial resources of the public and private sectors in a winning formula to create enduring, inviting, and valuable places.

¹ Interview with Alan Ward, principal, Sasaki Associate, author of *American Designed Landscapes* (Washington, D.C.: Spacemaker Press, 1998), November 2000.

Source: Richard Galehouse, Sasaki and Associates, 2001.

Milford is fortunate in that Milford Center contains all eight of these essential elements to some degree. Some elements such as composition of physical form, distinctive open spaces (green), pedestrian scale and connectivity to adjoining neighborhoods are stronger than others. Other elements such as access and partnership may require more attention in the future. The access element will relate primarily to signage, enhanced traffic movement and more accessible parking. The partnership between public and private sectors will be very important for managing issues and resources. The mixing of land uses and the physical form of such uses will be addressed through zoning and design regulations.

It is also interesting how Milford Center compares favorably to planning guidelines being used for the creation of new centers. For example, the five principals used for planning the Reston, VA Town Center, one of the most successful new communities in the country, describe what Milford Center is today and what the goal for the future should be.

The formula used by Reston Town Center to deliver a strong place-making dividend is summarized in the following five principles:

1. The town center had to be walkable; its core had to total 100 acres or less.
2. The town center had to contain a mix of uses—office, retail, restaurants, entertainment, and residential.
3. The mix of uses had to be dense enough to bring a critical mass of people (residents, workers, shoppers—live-work-shop) into the town center.
4. The spaces had to be attractive enough that people would choose to go to the town center.
5. The town center had to be easily accessible by car and by transit.

These planning principles have guided the development of Reston Town Center and have differentiated it from its competitors by creating a sense of place.

Source: David J. O'Neill, *The Smart Growth Tool Kit* (Washington, D.C.: ULI—the Urban Land Institute, 2001), p. 126.

In terms of scale, the heart of Milford Center, contains approximately 120 acres which compares favorably with the 100 acre core listed in these planning principles. There is a mix of uses, the area is attractive and it is accessible by both car and transit.

The mix of uses in Milford Center is reflected in the square footage of buildings devoted to various uses as recorded in the Milford Assessor records. Uses including retail, service and office uses total some 288,517 square feet. Within this total, the square footages within the clusters discussed earlier are as follows:

North Broad Street Frontage	60,232
South Broad Street Frontage	158,927
River Street	48,081
Daniel Street	21,277

This total of retail, service and office space is almost equaled by government and institutional uses which total 234,221 square feet. This extent of government and institutional use generates significant trips to Milford Center by both employees and people conducting business or receiving services. Many of the retail and service establishments rely on this activity for a substantial portion of their business.

It is interesting to note that with over 500,000 square feet of space in Milford Center, only an approximate 20,000 square feet is currently vacant with the building at the corner of Factory Lane and South Broad Street comprising the bulk of this space.

THE FUTURE

The land use patterns, activity clusters and essential elements of place making described above are well established and do not require dramatic changes. Milford Center is an attractive, unique, functioning downtown which should be nurtured not reinvented. There are several actions which should be considered as part of this nurturing. These include:

The land use patterns, activity clusters and essential elements of “place making” are well established in Milford and do not require dramatic changes. Milford Center is an attractive, unique, functioning downtown which should be nurtured not reinvented.

- Institute specific traffic and parking management programs including a signage program.
- Construction of a parking structure possibly in conjunction with a mixed use or residential development north of the railroad tracks and west of High Street.
- Create Gateway Districts at entry points. The purpose of these districts would be to encourage uses, design quality and traffic access management supportive of Milford Center.
- Strengthen pedestrian connections within the Downtown as well as with the Gateway Districts.
- Adoption of a Design Development District as a new zoning designation.
- Creation of an organized structure for management.

The following narrative addresses these activities.

PARKING DEMAND and SUPPLY

In order for any downtown to function properly, there must be an adequate supply of parking. This parking should be accessible, clearly identified by a coordinated signage program and at locations appropriate to support current and future needs.

In order to assess the supply and demand for parking, a survey of both on and off-street parking resources as well as usage patterns was completed. A technical memorandum was prepared and presented to the Planning and Zoning Board. This technical memorandum included a discussion of the methodology used, results of specific field inspections, as well as detailed tables on parking lot occupancies on an hourly basis. The basic findings of the technical memorandum included:

- There are 33 parking lots containing 2,321 spaces as shown on the map entitled Off-Street Parking. There are 195 on-street spaces for a total of 2,516 spaces serving the area.

Parking usage patterns in the Center relate to specific demand generators with specific peak hours. The most apparent parking shortages occur when the peak hour demand of various generators overlap. The combined assets of Milford Center which create its vitality causes these overlapping peaks at certain times of the day as well as on a seasonal basis.

- Within this inventory, 1,341 spaces are located in commuter permit lots and in lots serving specific public uses including the Court House, Post Office, Parsons Government Center and the Senior Center. While not available as part of the general parking inventory during normal business hours, these spaces are potentially available in the evenings and on weekends.
- The commercial core near the intersection of Broad Street and River Street has the concentration of land uses generating parking demand without off-street parking facilities dedicated to specific uses.
- Parking usage patterns in the Center relate to specific demand generators with specific peak hours. The most apparent parking shortages occur when the peak hour demand of various generators overlap. The combined assets of Milford Center which create its vitality causes these overlapping peaks at certain times of the day as well as on a seasonal basis. This should be viewed as an opportunity to be managed rather than as a negative. Many less vibrant downtowns find themselves using large areas for parking structures and surface lots which empty out at 5pm. These parking facilities create “dead spots” in the downtown in the evening and on weekends.
- A peak demand conflict in the Downtown relates to the location of a food establishment cluster within the Broad and River Street area. Within this cluster there are full-service sit-down restaurants including Stonebridge, 7 Seas, Archie Moore’s and Citrus as well as Subway and Dunkin Donuts, two high turnover food establishments. This cluster has 2 peaks 11:30am to 1:30pm and 4:30pm to 7:30pm. The lunch hour peak is within the peak hours of other major demand generators including commuter parking and government uses. The evening peak hour begins when commuter parking is still at its peak usage.

Based upon the square footage of building area by use, parking requirements of the Zoning Regulations, and the available parking inventory there is an estimated parking deficit of 325 spaces. However, actual usage patterns do not support this level of deficit.

The difference between the zoning requirement for parking and actual usage is attributable to the fact that many customers of business and service establishments are employees or visitors to the governmental uses and are parking in the lots supporting these uses and walking to destinations in Milford Center. In addition, people are parking once and visiting multiple destinations.

- The lot which most reflects this pattern of overlapping demand generated by restaurants is the 95 space public lot located in the interior of the block bordered by S. Broad Street and Factory Lane. This lot serves the mixed-use area with the greatest concentration of retail and service establishments. Throughout the day, this lot experiences occupancy levels at 50 to 60%. However, during the lunch hour and the early evening dinner hour the occupancy levels are 100%. In fact, during the summer months between 6:30 and 7:00pm occupancy often exceeds 100% with illegally parked cars.
- There has been some public discussion of the concept of compliance with parking requirements on-site in the Downtown as it is in other areas of Milford. In order to determine such parking requirements for existing uses in the Downtown, a comparison was made between the amount of parking available and the number of spaces needed if the parking requirements of the Milford Zoning Regulations are used. The Assessor's database was used to determine the square footage of the buildings and field research was used to determine detailed land use characteristics. The municipal uses including the Courthouse, Post Office, Parsons Governmental Center, City Hall and the Senior Center were excluded from the calculation as was the railroad parking demand. Likewise, the parking available for these uses was deducted from the parking inventory. Based upon the square footage of building area by use and based upon the requirements of the Zoning Regulations, the parking requirement for the balance of the properties in the study area is approximately 1,500 spaces. The available parking inventory to meet this requirement is 1,175 spaces when the parking discussed above is subtracted from the supply. This calculation results in a parking deficit of 325 spaces. However, actual usage patterns do not support this level of deficit. This difference between the zoning requirement for parking and actual usage is attributable to the fact that many of the customers of business and service establishments are employees or visitors to

the governmental uses and are parking in the lots supporting these uses and walking to destinations in Milford Center. In addition, people are parking once and visiting multiple destinations. Although, as noted above, at certain locations parking demand does exceed supply.

PARKING PROGRAM



Harbor Landing Parking



***Parking Area Behind
South Broad***



***Potential Parking Structure
Site***

A program is recommended which increases the capacity of existing parking resources through some physical changes as well as more centralized management. The following are specific recommendations.

- The parking area at Harbor Landing should be better delineated as a public lot with both signage and design improvements. The area adjacent to the existing parking lot currently leased for boat storage should be available for parking during the months of June through September.
- The individual parking lots adjacent to the public parking lot to the south of South Broad Street should be re-designed and linked with the public parking lot to provide a unified parking resource with access from both Factory Lane and High Street.
- It is recommended that a parking structure be considered for development in the area north of the railroad tracks and west of High Street. The existing commuter lot as well as the Senior Center parking lot should be considered as a site depending on the number of spaces to be provided. This facility would increase the amount of commuter parking and could possibly support new development in this area. Upon completion of this facility, commuter permit parking to the south of the tracks and the east of the Milford Fine Arts Building would become public parking to support downtown uses.



***Courthouse Parking for
Off-Peak Use***

***As stated in the
Introduction, the key
to the future of Milford
Center is the
management of
resources. Parking is
such a resource. The
best way to manage the
parking inventory and
implement the
recommendations
outlined above is to
centralize management
in one organization.***

- In order to further increase the availability of parking resources, it is recommended that off-peak use be made of the courthouse and post office parking lots. These lots are available after 5pm and on weekends. These spaces could be used for valet parking or park and lock. In addition, the parking lot at the Senior Center (if not used for a parking structure) is available off-peak and as a satellite lot for special events on the Green, in the Harbor area and at Fowler Field with shuttle bus service provided by the Milford Transit District. There area also parking lots which serve financial institutions north of North Broad Street which could be available during off-peak hours.

- An area which has potential to be improved as a parking resource is Fowler Field. This area currently has approximately 267 parking spaces scattered at various locations. The potential exists to increase the number of spaces and efficiency of the layout as part of a long term re-design of the entire park. This re-design should have as a priority an improvement of the area as a waterfront park amenity. The improvement of the area as a parking resource should be designed within this framework. The concept of a parking structure on this site is not proposed.

- As stated in the Introduction, the key to the future of Milford Center is the management of resources. Parking is such a resource. The best way to manage the parking inventory and implement the recommendations outlined above is to centralize management in one organization. This could be approached in two different ways. A parking authority could be established under Chapter 100 of the General Statutes of Connecticut. Such an authority would have a broad range of powers to acquire land for parking through purchase or lease, to finance improvements with general obligation bonds or revenue bonds and to manage facilities. A parking authority can also enter into agreements or contracts for the erection and construction of public parking garages. If a parking authority were to be established, it could negotiate with private property owners to lease and improve the consolidated parking area proposed to be

linked with the public parking area behind South Broad Street and to use the court parking during off-peak hours. A parking authority could also enter in negotiations with the Connecticut Department of Transportation and private landowners for the development of a parking facility in the vicinity of the train station.

A second approach could be the establishment of a Special Services District (SSD) under Chapter 105a of the General Statutes of Connecticut. As discussed later, such an organization could manage a variety of activities in Milford Center. Parking management could be one of the activities.

Whichever parking management approach is ultimately pursued, the goal should be to utilize parking resources to support the functionality and vitality of the area as a vibrant center of commerce, cultural and institutional life in Milford. The concept of shared use of parking resources provides the flexibility to support a variety of activities which keeps the Center alive throughout the full spectrum of day, weeks and seasons.

The differences between a parking authority and an SSD are several including:

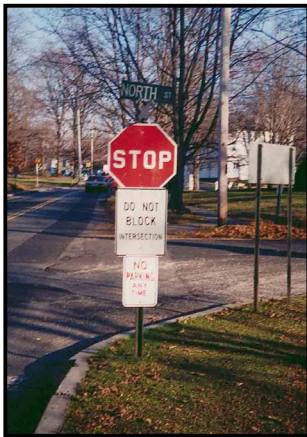
- An SSD does not have the power of eminent domain to acquire a property.
- An SSD is governed by a board of directors elected by the property owners within the district and the members of a parking authority are appointed by the Board of Aldermen.
- A parking authority is a single purpose entity while an SSD can provide a variety of services.

Whichever approach is ultimately pursued, the goal should be to utilize parking resources to support the functionality and vitality of the area as a vibrant center of commerce, cultural and institutional life in Milford. The concept of shared use of parking resources provides the flexibility to support a variety of activities which keeps the Center alive throughout the full spectrum of day, weeks and seasons.

SIGNAGE



Ineffective Signage



Negative Entry Signage

Positive signage is not only important in moving vehicles efficiently within the area, but it also sends a strong “welcome message” to visitors to the area.

The various parking resources can only be utilized to maximum efficiency if vehicles can be directed to appropriate locations. This requires a system of signage which both directs people to their destination and to appropriate parking facilities when they approach the destination. Directional signs should be placed along the various entry routes into Milford Center with the degree of specificity increasing as one approaches various destinations. It is recommended that graphics and colors be used within a design theme which is sensitive to the aesthetics of Milford Center. As shown in the photos, the most prominent signs in Milford Center today are the standard government issue signs directing people to the DMV and Superior Court. There are few if any signs directing people to the Center or specific destinations within the Center. One of the most bizarre signs is the one located on West Main Street directing people to Derby and Waterbury. In fact, most of the signs currently found in the Downtown are a prohibition against something rather than a positive sign of direction. Positive signage is not only important in moving vehicles efficiently within the area, but it also sends a strong “welcome message” to visitors to the area. It is important to support the strength of Milford Center as a pedestrian scale experience. This is best done by welcoming vehicles and directing them to destinations with appropriate parking to get people out of their vehicles. Examples of such a signage system used in New Haven is shown in the following photographs.



Downtown New Haven Signage

Positive signage is important to support the strength of Milford Center as a pedestrian scale experience. This is best done by welcoming vehicles and directing them to destinations with appropriate parking to get people out of their vehicles.

A prototype sign for Milford Center is shown as a suggested approach. A Signage Plan has also been prepared which shows the potential locations for various directional signs.



TRAFFIC CIRCULATION

Traffic circulation in Milford Center poses a challenge common to many older downtowns along the Connecticut coast where Route 1 and similar east-west routes are often the main street.

There is a need to balance the pressure to accommodate through traffic with the desire to access various destinations within the area and maintain the aesthetic character of the area. There is a further desire for the downtown to be a pedestrian friendly environment.

Traffic circulation in Milford Center poses a challenge common to many older downtowns along the Connecticut coast where Route 1 and similar east-west routes are often the main street. There is a need to balance the pressure to accommodate through traffic with the desire to access various destinations within the area and maintain the aesthetic character of the area. There is a further desire for the downtown to be a pedestrian friendly environment. The 1972 Plan of Development recommended the one-way pair system utilizing North and South Broad Streets in conjunction with Daniel Street for through traffic movements which is in effect today. The long range plan recommended an extension of North Broad Street from River Street to Prospect Street with a new two lane bridge crossing the Wepawaug River. The Circulation Map shows the pattern of one way streets which is present in Downtown.

During the planning process, the question was posed whether a revision to the basic circulation system could be made which could reduce traffic congestion in the vicinity of the Broad Street, River Street, New Haven Avenue, Factory Lane intersection. A planning method traffic analysis was completed for this intersection. Various alternatives were considered including the creation of a conventional four-way intersection by making both the River Street and New Haven Avenue segments of the intersection two-way. A variation on this design wherein the one-way movement on Daniel Street is reversed to create local access to this area was considered. A technical memorandum was prepared for discussion with the Planning and Zoning Board.

The conclusion of the analysis was that the current circulation pattern provides for a slightly greater capacity than the four-way intersection. This is because traffic now using Daniel Street and intersecting with River Street to the north when added to the reconfigured intersection would be added to critical movements at the four way intersection thus reducing capacity. It was further concluded that significant increases in the capacity of the reconfigured intersection could be achieved if the street widening and new bridge over the Wepawaug as proposed in the 1972 Plan was undertaken.

It should be made clear that the large percentage of traffic at peak hours when the greatest congestion is experienced is pass through traffic. Development in Milford Center is not the primary cause of actual and/or perceived traffic congestion at the subject intersection.

Pedestrian activity particularly during the afternoon peak hour does increase vehicular delays due to the increased frequency of the pedestrian phase of the traffic signal. This is a result of the vitality of Milford Center with its mix of uses including offices, the railroad station and restaurants which all generate pedestrian traffic during the afternoon peak hour. This pedestrian traffic is further increased on a seasonal basis during the summer when the Harbor and a variety of outdoor events are major attractions.

However, such an extensive project is not proposed since it is inconsistent with the character and scale of Milford Center.

One issue identified in the analysis which impacts the capacity of the intersection is the number of pedestrian crosswalk “calls” at the traffic signal during the afternoon peak hour as well as the pre-empt operation of the signal by the fire department. Both of these uses of signal time reduce the amount of time available for vehicular movement. It should be made clear that the large percentage of traffic at peak hours when the greatest congestion is experienced is pass through traffic. Development in Milford Center is not the primary cause of actual and/or perceived traffic congestion at the subject intersection. Pedestrian activity particularly during the afternoon peak hour does increase vehicular delays due to the increased frequency of the pedestrian phase of the traffic signal. This is a result of the vitality of Milford Center with its mix of uses including offices, the railroad station and restaurants which all generate pedestrian traffic during the afternoon peak hour. This pedestrian traffic is further increased on a seasonal basis during the summer when the Harbor and a variety of outdoor events are major attractions. Planning for the future should proceed with a balance and in the best interests of Milford Center with vehicular and pedestrian movement improved without dramatically altering the physical fabric of the Center.

In this regard, a coordinated program for improvement is recommended. The first recommended action relates to the current one-way south bound traffic movement of High Street as it passes through the Green. This prohibition against traffic movement northbound results in the need for circuitous routings which result in various disconnects. To address this issue of connectivity, it is recommended that the subject section of High Street become two-way. The benefits of this change would be:

- Reduction of traffic approaching the River Street intersection during peak hour periods.
- Reduction of traffic using local streets south of South Broad Street to access Lafayette Street which currently permits a westbound and

eventual northbound movement.

Planning for the future should proceed with a balance and in the best interests of Milford Center with vehicular and pedestrian movement improved without dramatically altering the physical fabric of the Center.

- Better access from the proposed consolidated parking area behind the properties on South Broad Street.

The traffic signal control equipment at the CT. Rt.162 (North/South Broad Street) and High Street intersection would be upgraded to include new control equipment at North Broad Street and High Street to accommodate two-way traffic flows, incorporation of “opticom” emergency vehicle pre-empt equipment and the evaluation of revised pedestrian timings in cooperation with the Connecticut Department of Transportation.

A second action is to improve the operation of the Broad Street, River Street, New Haven Avenue, Factory Lane intersection in cooperation with the Connecticut Department of Transportation. The existing traffic signal control equipment would be upgraded including consideration of a northbound advance (green) phase for Factory Lane, inclusion of modern “opticom” emergency vehicle pre-empt equipment, revised pedestrian timings and corner radii improvements on the southeast corner to provide an enhanced opportunity for northbound to eastbound traffic to get around traffic waiting to make a left turn from Factory onto North Broad Street. This improvement could be supplemented with the stationing of a police officer at the River Street/Broad Street intersection during the afternoon peak hour to address the pedestrian phases and generally manage traffic flows.

A third action is the upgrading of the traffic signal control equipment at the CT Rt. 162 (New Haven Ave.) and Prospect Street/Shipyard Lane intersection, including the integration of new “opticom” emergency vehicle pre-empt equipment, revised pedestrian timings and the possibility of minor widening on the north side of New Haven Avenue west of Prospect Street to accommodate the construction of a new eastbound to northbound left turn lane.

All of these actions would be integrated in the development of an interconnected (coordinated) traffic signal system for overall benefit to Milford Center.

PEDESTRIAN LINKAGES

One of the greatest assets of Milford Center is its pedestrian scale and mix of uses which encourage walking. This pedestrian orientation is organized around very strong physical forms with a north-south spine along the Wepawaug River to the Harbor and an east-west spine along the Green. The street system and built environment creates destinations within this physical form. In addition, the downtown portion of the Center is surrounded by residential neighborhoods within walking distance. The Action Plan includes a system of pedestrian connections. A detailed sidewalk plan should be prepared to enhance the pedestrian experience.

ACTION PLAN

As stated throughout this plan element, Milford Center is a basically sound and thriving area. What is needed is the attention to detail and management of resources.

The various Milford Center Plan components are represented on the map entitled Milford Center Action Plan. Components include suggested parking and traffic improvements, pedestrian linkages, and regulatory approaches. It is anticipated that this Action Plan will be implemented through a variety of governmental actions as well as public/private partnerships. In fact, it is this cooperation and partnerships that will positively impact Milford Center in the future. As stated throughout this plan element, Milford Center is a basically sound and thriving area. What is needed is the attention to detail and management of resources. Much of this cannot be represented graphically on a map such as the Action Plan.

LAND USE and REGULATORY APPROACHES

The goal of the Milford Center Plan is to continue to promote the mix of uses in Milford Center which gives the area its vitality. This mix of uses will be achieved within a quality design environment to protect and enhance the aesthetic quality of Milford Center. However, rather than have a variety of zoning districts within the downtown portion of Milford Center, the adoption of a Milford Center Design Development District is proposed for the area.

The mix of land uses in Milford Center is reflected in the Central Business District (CBD) and General Office (GO) zones which encompass the traditional downtown area. The CBD district contains the retail, service and restaurant uses. The GO districts located on the north side of the Green to the east and west of the CBD district are predominately in office use. As one moves further east and west from Milford Center, the zoning districts and uses become more mixed. To the east, New Haven Avenue contains a mixture of General Industrial (GI), Residential Office (RO), General Business (GB) and Limited Business (LB) zones. To the west there is a mix of GB, GO and RO districts with several areas zoned Residential Multi-Family (RMF-16). As one moves further west towards the intersection of Bridgeport Avenue and Boston Post Road, the GI district is most prevalent. To the north and south, the neighborhoods which are integral to Milford Center are zoned for a variety of residential densities between R-7.5 and R-12.5.

The goal of this plan is to continue the mix of uses in Milford Center which gives the area its vitality. This mix of uses will be achieved within a quality design environment to protect and enhance the aesthetic quality of Milford Center. However, rather than have a variety of zoning districts within the downtown portion of Milford Center, the adoption of a Milford Center Design Development District is proposed for the area shown on the map entitled Milford Center Design Development District. This zoning district will standardize the list of permitted land uses for consistency. In addition, the entire zone will have design criteria to be applied to the review of development proposals. These design criteria will address the following:

1. Height;
2. Bulk and general massing;
3. Major divisions or rhythms of the façade;
4. Proportion of openings (i.e. window to wall relationships);
5. Roof treatment;
6. Materials and textures of buildings and signage. In general, natural

materials such as stone, brick, wood siding, shingles, slate, etc. are preferred to industrial or artificial materials such as raw or exposed aggregate concrete, anodized or galvanized metal, tinted glass, plastics, vinyls, etc.;

7. General architectural character;
 - a) Horizontal or vertical emphasis;
 - b) Scale;
 - c) Stylistic features and themes, pediments, cupolas, cornices, coins, detail and ornament);
8. Relation to street; and
9. Signage

In order to provide for proper consideration of a proposed development in relation to the design criteria it is recommended that specific design criteria and procedures be incorporated into the Site Plan Review requirements and that certain uses be added to those which currently require a Special Permit in the CBD district.

Within this district, sub-areas will be designated which will have specific design controls. Potential sub-areas include: Civic Center, Adaptive Re-Use, Medical Center, Commercial Core and Transition Area. The design guidelines will protect unique features such as the set back and other design qualities of the properties on North Broad Street. Guidelines for properties on South Broad Street will emphasize the importance of street façade, signage and architectural fenestration of structures.

In order to provide for proper consideration of a proposed development in relation to the design criteria it is recommended that specific design criteria and procedures be incorporated into the Site Plan Review requirements and that certain uses be added to those which currently require a Special Permit in the CBD district. The Design Charette sponsored by MPI has developed a series of detailed design guidelines. These guidelines should be considered for incorporation into the Site Plan review requirements.

These Special Permit uses would include: restaurants with outdoor service areas; residential uses not within a mixed use building; and mixed use buildings where less than 25% of the total gross floor area is devoted to residential use. These Special Permit designations should be made in conjunction with the previously recommended parking improvements in order to provide reasonable alternatives to on-site parking. The residential uses not within mixed use buildings would be required to have 30% of the units affordable in accordance with Section 8-30g of the State Statutes.

Earlier in the Plan there was discussion of the potential for adoption of a Village District for a portion of Milford Center. While the Planning and Zoning Board might want to consider a Village District in the update of the Zoning Regulations, the proposed Milford Center Design Development District may accomplish the same objectives of a Village District without the adoption of an additional layer of regulation. Recent trends in Connecticut have shown that the Village District approach is being utilized in smaller more rural communities with less development than Milford Center.

IMPLEMENTATION and MANAGEMENT

It is recommended that a Special Services District (SSD) be considered for a portion of the area proposed as the Milford Center Design Development District. The approval of an SSD requires an affirmative vote of the majority of the property owners representing a majority of the assessed value as listed in the most recent Grand List. If approved, the SSD can levy additional taxes to carry out a variety of activities for the betterment of the district. In addition, the SSD can provide a forum for participation of property owners and businesses as well as the coordination of activities to be implemented by City and state departments.

The land use and design controls discussed above will be implemented by the Planning and Zoning Board within the context of the Milford Zoning Regulations. In addition, it is recommended that a Special Services District (SSD) be considered for a portion of the area proposed as the Milford Center Design Development District. The approval of an SSD requires an affirmative vote of the majority of the property owners representing a majority of the assessed value as listed in the most recent Grand List. If approved, the SSD can levy additional taxes to carry out a variety of activities for the betterment of the district. In addition, the SSD can provide a forum for participation of property owners and businesses as well as the coordination of activities to be implemented by City and state departments. If an SSD is not approved, an alternative approach would be to establish a voluntary membership organization to provide a similar purpose.

The ten typical functions of an SSD as cited by the International Downtown Association are as follows:

1. Maintenance - collecting rubbish, removing litter and graffiti, washing sidewalks, shoveling snow, cutting grass, trimming trees, and planting flowers in public places.
2. Security - hiring supplementary security and street “guides” or “ambassadors” and buying and installing electronic security equipment or special police equipment.
3. Consumer marketing - producing festivals and events, coordinating sales promotions, producing maps and newsletters, launching image enhancement and advertising campaigns, and erecting directional signage.
4. Business recruitment and retention - conducting market research, producing data-oriented reports, offering financial incentives for new and expanding businesses, and marketing to investors.

5. Public space regulation - managing sidewalk vending, street performances, street furniture, code compliance, and vehicle loading and unloading.
6. Parking and transportation management - managing the public parking system, maintaining transit shelters, and operating ridesharing programs.
7. Urban design - developing urban design guidelines and managing facade improvement programs.
8. Social services - creating or assisting with help-the-homeless, job training, and youth services programs.
9. Visioning - developing a vision or strategic plan.
10. Capital improvements – installing pedestrian scale lighting and street furniture and planting and maintain trees.

Source: Richard Bradley, International Downtown Association.

While not all of these functions may be appropriate for the SSD in Milford Center, many address the issues and initiatives previously discussed. Most likely several of the functions would remain the responsibility of existing governmental agencies and departments. However, the SSD would be the primary coordinating organization and would serve as the link with property owners and businesses in Milford Center.

CONCLUSION

The natural and built environment of Milford Center create a setting which is unsurpassed in town centers in Connecticut.

The vision for Milford Center is one of economic and social vitality within a physical setting which brings people together as a community within the heart of Milford.

The Downtown Design Charette by the Yale Urban Design Workshop under the sponsorship of Milford Progress, Inc. and this plan element recognize the unique character of Milford Center. The natural and built environment create a setting which is unsurpassed in town centers in Connecticut. The setting combined with changes in market development trends and a desire of people to return to traditional centers has resulted in recent investments in Milford Center. The recommendations contained in this plan element as well as the Downtown Charette, which is incorporated in this Plan of Conservation and Development by reference, will guide the future of Milford Center to achieve the community's vision. This vision is one of economic and social vitality within a physical setting which brings people together as a community within the heart of Milford.

6. FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

While Milford is a mature community in terms of the percentage of the community which is developed it still contains an abundance of natural resources including wetlands, floodplains, watersheds, waterbodies and coastal resources.

Protection of environmentally sensitive areas and the conservation of open space have been a major focus in the development of this current plan. At the same time, it is recognized that investment and development is important to address tax base issues. A strong tax base is necessary to support the quality of life in Milford envisioned by its residents. A balance between conservation and development will be a primary focus of future land use issues in the City.

The Land Use Plan illustrates the proposed pattern of conservation and development in the City. It recommends the most appropriate location and relationship of major land uses, including proposals for residential development; commercial development; business districts; industrial development; community facilities such as open space areas, civic uses and institutional uses; and special design districts and conservation areas. The Land Use Plan is a narrative and graphic presentation of the City's vision for the future. The Land Use Plan Map, which follows this page, provides a broad-based illustration of desired development patterns. It is based largely upon existing land use and development patterns, environmental and natural features, physical features, current zoning, planning analysis and the desires and vision of citizens and community stakeholders as expressed at public forums held throughout the plan development process.

The majority of Milford's land has already been developed. However, while Milford is a mature community in terms of the percentage of the community which is developed it still contains an abundance of natural resources including wetlands, floodplains, watersheds, waterbodies and coastal resources. Throughout the plan development process it was apparent that people are increasingly concerned that future development be sensitive to the protection and preservation of these natural areas. This is of particular concern since much of the vacant land or areas expected to experience in-fill development or redevelopment impact natural resources in some manner. Protection of environmentally sensitive areas and the conservation of open space have been a major focus in the development of this current plan. At the same time, it is recognized that investment and development is important to address tax base issues. A strong tax base is necessary to support the quality of life in Milford envisioned by its residents. A balance between conservation and development will be a primary focus of future land use issues in the City.

The achievement of the balance between conservation and development will be achieved by adhering to broad policies as well as specific goals and objectives. These policies, goals and objectives must guide Milford as a

sustainable community over the next 10 years and beyond. One can define a sustainable community as a complete community. It is necessary to look at the community holistically and to recognize the interdependence of natural, built, political, economic and organizational systems. Sustainable development recognizes that the whole of the system or community is much more than the sum of its parts. In Milford's case, the extent of the built environment system which exists makes this holistic approach crucial to the future. Decisions related to the use of a specific parcel of land can no longer be looked at in isolation, but must be considered with recognition of the interdependence of systems. This interdependence ranges from the broad impacts on natural resources of Long Island Sound to the impact of infill development on neighbors or neighborhoods.

The Land Use Plan, although comprised of numerous land use designations recognizes the interdependence of uses and areas. There are broad principles which guide the Land Use Plan. These principles include:

- Respect for the natural resource system of the watersheds and tributaries that feed the Long Island Sound through the establishment of areas of critical concern. While a variety of land uses are proposed in these areas, all development will be reviewed with respect to the impact on the natural resource system.
- Respect for the built environment comprised of the numerous residential neighborhoods which form the community character of Milford. The Land Use Plan recommends a range of residential densities consistent with the current character of the neighborhoods.
- Respect for the infrastructure capacity and the ability to sustain future development. This infrastructure includes sewer and water service as well as the network of local streets, limited access highways and mass transit which serves Milford. The interdependency between the built environment and infrastructure capacity is critical.

- Respect for the need for continued investment in economic development to sustain the tax base. The Land Use Plan focuses the economic development generating uses within areas similar to the 1972 Plan of Development. These areas are generally within the central east-west corridor formed by Route 1, Route I-95, Route 162 and the railroad as well as along the Housatonic River and at Route 15 in the vicinity of the I-95 connector. Within these areas there are a variety of land use designations to achieve development which is compatible with natural resources, residential neighborhoods and existing infrastructure.

There are several broad-based goals that came out of the near two years of meetings, public input, research and analysis undertaken as part of the Plan of Conservation and Development Update. These goals serve to guide the Plan as it sets forth the future vision for conservation and development in the City. As the Plan of Conservation and Development serves as an advisory document and policy guide for the City it is key that goals and policies set forth in the Plan are incorporated into in the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations. The Zoning and Subdivision Regulations are the implementing authority for local planning and development. The broad-based goals that have guided development of the Land Use Plan are as follows.

GOAL: ***Plan for Future Development and Land Use in Keeping with the Nature of Surrounding Land Uses, Land Attributes and Location***

Policies

- ◆ The Plan should eliminate all residential development and uses in non-residential zones. The Land Use Plan includes specific Design Districts which should allow for mixed-use development at key locations in the City. Residential uses should be eliminated in all non-residential districts with the exception of specific design districts. In these districts

specific design criteria shall be established to ensure compatibility between uses.

- ◆ Building heights and densities along the shoreline should be reduced.
- ◆ Landfills shall be prohibited, whether operating, closed or capped, in open space or adjacent to residential zones or developments.
- ◆ Residential development should not be permitted on or adjacent to operating, closed or capped landfills. The goal is to discourage all residential development on or adjacent to landfills whether, operating, closed or capped unless the applicant gains all health and safety approvals from appropriate local, state and federal agencies.
- ◆ In the future, any development built next to or on a landfill shall be compatible with such landfill in terms of health, safety and relevant issues.
- ◆ New landfills should be prohibited in the City.
- ◆ Protect residential neighborhoods from encroachment by inappropriate non-residential uses.
- ◆ Limit the granting of Special Exceptions for non-residential uses in residential zones.

GOAL: ***Plan for Future Development and Land Use in the Best Interest of the City***

Policies

- ◆ To ensure the availability of land for economic development opportunities residential development and uses in non-residential commercial, industrial and office districts should be prohibited.

- ◆ The Plan should promote energy-efficient patterns of development. Energy-efficient patterns of development include locational planning to promote higher residential densities adjacent to major thoroughfares and mass transportation, the promotion of “greener” development, the promotion of infill development as opposed to sprawl and the encouragement of residential development within close proximity to goods and services. Energy-efficient patterns of development can be used to achieve energy conservation. As appropriate, the use of solar and other renewable forms of energy should be encouraged.
- ◆ Water-dependent uses should be protected from development for non-water related usage. As a coastal community the protection and enhancement of water-dependent uses and public access to the shore is critical.
- ◆ Residential use, with the exception of caretaker accommodations, should not be permitted in Boating Business zones. The City’s marinas are both a recreational and commercial fishing asset to the community. The protection and preservation of such uses are important to the City’s character.
- ◆ To address transportation concerns and traffic and parking congestion in Milford Center the potential for a second train station in Devon should be investigated for future feasibility.

GOAL: ***Plan for Future Development That Provides a Balance Between Land Conservation and Development***

Policies

- ◆ Incorporate Conservation Design Principles into the City’s existing development regulations, design district regulations and/or in-fill development guidelines. The guiding principle behind Conservation

Design is to protect important open space areas and natural resources and to promote the creation or protection of an interconnected network of open natural areas, recreation areas, greenways and/or trails.

- ◆ Develop “Conservation Design” regulations to achieve open space preservation while at the same time allowing for environmentally sensitive development.

The attached Land Use Plan Map illustrates the proposed pattern of conservation and development in the City. It provides a generalized illustration of desired development patterns and recommends the most appropriate location and relationship of major land uses, including proposals for residential development; commercial development; business districts; industrial development; community facilities such as open space areas, civic uses and institutional uses; and special design districts and conservation areas. The Land Use Plan is based largely upon existing land use and development patterns, environmental and natural features, physical features, current zoning, planning analysis and the desires and vision of citizens and community stakeholders as expressed at public forums held throughout the plan development process. Due to the generalized nature of the Land Use Plan there may be individual parcels within an area with a land use different from the land use designation. As described above, the purpose of the Land Use Plan is to illustrate proposed patterns and relationships of uses.

The development of an updated Plan of Conservation and Development and Land Use Plan serves to guide the City’s future development as an advisory or policy-setting document. Key to successful future development is the creation of Zoning and Subdivision regulations, design guidelines and implementation techniques which explicitly outline and enforce the vision for the City set forth in the Plan. Strict enforcement of implementing regulations and adherence to the Plan will be key to achieving the established vision for the future.

The Land Use Plan contains a variety of land use categories which address location, density and current conditions. These categories and their general location are described in more detail below.

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT CATEGORIES

Low Density Residential

Areas having a residential density of no more than 1 dwelling unit per acre. Such areas are generally restricted to the northern portion of the City. Cluster development and residential developments that promote land conservation design elements should be encouraged in these areas. The guiding principle behind conservation design is to protect important open space areas and natural resources and to promote the creation or protection of an inter-connected network of open natural areas, recreation areas, greenways and or trails.

Clustering should be considered only if it advances the objectives of the Plan such as natural resource protection, protection of surrounding properties, protection of community character and/or the greening of the community.

Medium-Low Density

Areas having a residential density of 1 ¼ to 4 dwelling units per acre (R-30, R-18, R-12.5 and some R-10). These areas cover much of the City's residential areas between I-95 and Route 15, between I-95 and Route 1 and the southeastern portion of the City. Cluster developments or subdivisions that promote conservation design elements should also be encouraged on vacant and redeveloped land in these areas consistent with surrounding neighborhood densities.

Medium-High Density

Areas having a residential density of 4 to 6 dwelling units per acre (R-12.5, R-10 and R-7.5). These areas are primarily confined to the older established

communities along the Sound and around Milford and Devon Centers. Low-rise, multiple-family developments at a compatible density of bedrooms per acre should be permitted in these areas, but limited to sites that can best meet the conditions and requirements necessary for satisfactory multiple-family development such as highway access and/or access to mass transportation.

Shoreline Residential

These areas encompass the beachfront areas adjacent to the Long Island Sound along the City's eastern and western shorelines. Much of the area is zoned R-7.5 or R-5 allowing 6 to 8 dwelling units per acre. Due to the nature of these shoreline neighborhoods special planning and development considerations are required. Many of the residential structures within these neighborhoods were originally designed as summer cottages on small lots with little or no off-street parking.

These shorefront neighborhoods have become popular locations for residential infill development and redevelopment. Future development in these neighborhoods should be directed to preserve and protect natural resources and to be compatible to the scale, density and character of the surrounding neighborhood.

High Density

These areas include existing high density multi-family developments, condominium/ townhouse developments, shorefront redevelopment areas, and multi-family sites.

The Plan also recommends that mid-rise, multiple-family dwellings and residential uses be permitted in proposed Commercial Corridor Districts on sites that are easily accessible to mass transportation and/or limited access highways.

Cascade Boulevard Design District

This area includes lands on and adjacent to Cascade Boulevard which have been determined to be appropriate for residential use. Creation of a

residential design district in this area will allow for careful review and control of the sites and site layout within the district; protection of the Indian River, Indian Lake and Quirk Pond watershed and related watercourses; and incorporation of conservation design principles. The use of conservation design principles and clustered placement of residential units will allow for protection and conservation of much of the surrounding natural features particularly the wetland areas and sloping ridgelines.

NON-RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT CATEGORIES

Milford Center

This area contains those uses and areas which define the “Center” of Milford. At the core of the area is the Green, City Hall and the Municipal/Government Complex. Milford Harbor and the train station are also focal points in this area that help to define development patterns, circulation and building usage.

Milford Center is defined by Milford Hospital at the western end and the Gulf Street/New Haven Avenue intersection at the eastern end. Milford Hospital is becoming a greater presence in the Center than it had been during previous plans. Medical and medical-related offices, support services and retail establishments have emerged in the vicinity of the hospital. Such uses should be encouraged in the western portion of the area along Golden Hill Street and in the adjacent transitional area along Bridgeport Avenue.

The Milford Center Component of this Plan of Conservation and Development and the Milford Center Plan commissioned by Milford Progress, Inc. and the Chamber of Commerce contain specific proposals, plans and improvements for the area. Milford Harbor and the Wepawaug River are unique resources and serve as key identifying components of the City’s center. Projects and activities that protect these important resources while at the same time promote access and uses which showcase these resources are encouraged.

Corridor Design District

These areas encompass the Bridgeport Avenue/Route 1/Boston Post Road Corridor and the New Haven/Route 162 corridor. Access management planning and the development and implementation of design guidelines and standards are proposed for these areas. There are several distinct commercial corridor segments within this designation that fulfill a unique and/or specific function within the community and the region. Site design guidelines, landscaping and streetscape improvements, parking standards and access management design elements will be incorporated into the “design district” guidelines for these areas. Although most of the design and development standards will be similar in all districts each of the segments will have additional requirements and/or standards which address their unique location, function and/or physical or environmental features.

As described in the Commercial Corridors Element of this plan, within the Commercial Corridor Design District land use plan classification there are several distinct areas or nodes which lend themselves to particular design treatments and/or land usage. These sub-areas and their envisioned future land usage are as follows:

Transitional Zones/Gateways - Transitional Zones, which serve as Gateways to Milford Center, are proposed on both Bridgeport Avenue and New Haven Avenue. Uses in these areas should be those that complement projects and uses in Milford Center. Multi-family residential development of a scale and density consistent with surrounding uses should be encouraged in these areas. The New Haven Avenue Transitional Zone, with its proximity to the downtown and train station would be well suited for such multi-family development. The Bridgeport Avenue Transitional Zone, with its proximity to Milford Hospital, would be the logical location for medical and related usage in addition to other transitional uses.

Bridgeport Avenue Design District - This area encompasses the Bridgeport Avenue/Route 1 corridor from the intersection of the Boston Post Road and Bridgeport Avenue on the east to Exit 34

ramp of I-95 on the west. The most prevalent land use in this area is the series of establishments which comprise “automobile row”. This area also contains two major retail sites with K-Mart and Super Stop & Shop as the anchors. There are highway related uses including McDonalds and some older motels in the vicinity of the Exit 34 ramp. There is also a significant natural resource area comprised of Milford Reservoir and adjacent wetlands.

With the concentration of automobile dealers and the two major retail sites, this area serves a combination of regional and community markets. Future land use policies for this area should be to sustain the existing land use patterns with increased emphasis on design review particularly in terms of streetscape and “front door” appearance. An access management plan should be prepared which limits the number of entrances to property frontages.

New Haven Avenue Design District - This area encompasses the portion of New Haven Avenue between Pepe’s Farm Road on the east and Buckingham Avenue on the west. This area contains a mixture of retail, service, restaurant and residential uses within a fairly narrow strip with frontage on New Haven Avenue. There is a concentration of automotive related uses near the intersection with Old Gate Lane. The location of these uses adjacent to the outlet of Indian River and Gulf Pond is problematic from a natural resource protection standpoint. Development standards should be adopted for this area which protect these resources. The balance of the area should be the subject of an access management plan as well as streetscape/“front door” design standards.

Community Design District - This area encompasses the Boston Post Road from its intersection with Bridgeport Avenue to I-95 Exit 39. Highway access to both I-95 and Route 15 exists in this area. During the plan development process, planning analysis has shown that this area along the Boston Post Road lacks a specific identity.

There is no consistency of usage however community-oriented uses, such as the Police Department, the Public Works Department and Gloria's Farm Market serve as community landmarks along this portion of the Route 1 corridor. Community-oriented commercial and office uses and multi-family development on larger or assembled properties should be encouraged within this corridor. Residential development with 30% of the units affordable in accordance with Section 8-30g should be added to the Zoning Regulations as Special Permit uses.

Regional Commercial District

This area encompasses the Boston Post Road/Route 1 Corridor from the Connecticut Post Mall eastward to the Town of Orange. Existing retail uses within this area have a regional draw, bringing people into the City from throughout New Haven and Fairfield Counties. The future land use policy for this area should be to strengthen this area as a regional retail area.

Devon/Naugatuck Avenue/ Walnut Beach Design District

The Devon Center portion of this area extends from the Milford/Stratford town line along Bridgeport Avenue to the I-95, Exit 34 interchange. Streetscape improvements and development design standards which improve the overall appearance of the corridor and encourage development in keeping with the scale of the surrounding uses should be developed and implemented to unify the area. Consideration should be given to permitting an increase in the depth of non-residential development along Bridgeport Avenue at appropriate locations within Devon Center. The Devon Center Improvement Plan prepared for the area should be used to guide streetscape improvements.

Naugatuck Avenue forms a north-south corridor running between Devon, the Walnut Beach Redevelopment Area and the shoreline. Naugatuck Avenue contains a mix of commercial, industrial, civic, institutional and residential uses. Streetscape improvements, which include the screening of automotive uses, and unifying design elements are key to providing a distinctive character and appearance to this area. Development design standards to ensure infill development is in keeping with its surroundings

and sensitive to environmental constraints and infrastructure capacity shall be developed as part of zoning revisions to guide future development activity.

The Walnut Beach Redevelopment Area defines the southern end of Naugatuck Avenue. The shopping center developed as part of the overall redevelopment plan is underutilized and calls for increased usage and improvement. Reuse of the site to accommodate a mix of commercial and multi-family housing is recommended. There is a potential need for some retail such as limited grocery and convenience shopping to support the high concentration of multi-family units in the area. The creation of destination shopping wherein a unique mix of goods and services are offered would also be appropriate for this area. Its location near the shore offers an opportunity for small scale commercial enterprises, such as restaurants, boutiques or galleries which capitalize on the location. The concept of creating an “artists” environment has been discussed as a marketing alternative for this area. Such a use would be in keeping with the scale of the lower Naugatuck Avenue/ Broadway/Monroe Street area.

The future vision for the Walnut Beach Shopping Center is for mixed-use development with the potential for multi-family as part of the overall development consistent with the Walnut Beach Revitalization Plan for the area.

Woodmont Center Commercial

This area is located within Woodmont and includes Treat’s Farm Market and the adjacent neighborhood/community shopping center. This area provides a commercial node in the southeastern portion of the City along New Haven Avenue.

Interchange Commercial

These areas are located adjacent to selected interchanges with I-95. Uses such as the tractor trailer truck related uses, restaurants, hotels and other transportation-oriented uses play an important role along the I-95 corridor. The City has several nodes along I-95 which cater to the interstate highway system presently. The future land use policy for these areas should be on

those interchange uses which are high traffic generating and value close proximity to the interstate.

Design Office

Areas that are or are intended to be developed for corporate office park usage. Requirements under the Design Office category include the provision that 50% or more of the site be left as open space. In these areas, open space preservation should serve two primary functions the conservation of natural resource areas or areas of environmental concern and the provision of linkages between other open space and recreation areas.

Residential-Office

These existing built-up areas are generally in areas of transition. They contain large older residential structures that have experienced development pressure for the change from residential to non-residential uses and will continue to experience such pressure. Because of their size, many of these structures are better suited for office usage. But, because of their proximity to Milford Center and the Historic District it is recommended that they retain a predominantly residential character in terms of architectural appearance. In addition to the adaptive reuse of existing residential structures it is suggested that the City permit new office development at a density and scale compatible with surrounding development in some of these emerging transition areas, such as Cherry Street and West Main Street. Such development provides transition, at an appropriate scale and density, to Milford Center and the City's historic district.

Office

Areas that are or are intended to be developed for general office usage including corporate office usage.

Industrial

Areas that are or are intended to be developed for manufacturing, warehousing and industrial usage.

Housatonic Design District

Area along the Housatonic River and the railroad tracks between I-95 and Route 15. Uses in the Housatonic Design District include or are intended to include a mix of industrial and water-dependent uses in keeping with the waterfront location.

CIVIC/INSTITUTIONAL & OPEN SPACE CATEGORIES**Civic/Schools**

Areas including existing schools, school complexes and major civic facilities and uses.

Cemetery

Areas containing existing cemeteries.

Open Space

Areas including existing parks, recreation areas, designated open space, land trust lands, and golf courses.

Desirable Open Space

Areas that would contribute to the City's open space resources. These areas include the preservation of existing agricultural uses, environmentally sensitive areas, areas of significant natural resources and parcels which have the capacity to provide open space or educational linkages.

Conservation Corridors

Areas that serve one or more conservation or open space functions: natural resource protection, open space expansion or the linkage of existing open space areas and municipal facilities. Within these sensitive areas development along waterways should be regulated to ensure the protection of water and coastal resources. As opportunities arise efforts should be undertaken to develop linkages and open space corridors.

Designation as a Conservation Corridor does not specify acquisition of

properties nor the provision of public access on private property as part of a greenway. A variety of approaches to natural resource protection and open space enhancement would be used in a coordinated program to meet overall conservation goals. It should be further noted that the underlying land use designation determines the use of the property. Inclusion in a Conservation Corridor provides guidance to City boards and agencies in the review of proposals for properties within the corridors in order to achieve the stated natural resource protection and open space goals.

Coastal Area Management Zone

A significant amount of Milford's land falls within the State of Connecticut's Coastal Area Management Zone. Development activities which occur within this zone are subject to specific development review criteria related to the protection of coastal and natural resources. Within this area, water-dependent usage is given development preference.

Road Classifications

The map entitled Functional Road Classifications shows the various classifications of roads in Milford as defined by Connecticut Department of Transportation (DOT). The Minor Arterial classification has been changed to Major Collector to be more consistent with the 1972 Plan of Development definitions. This classification system is used by DOT to establish priorities for the expenditures of funds. The higher the classification, the higher the priority. The arterials are intended to move traffic with limits to access ranging from very limited access on Interstate 95, the Wilbur Cross Parkway and the Milford Parkway to controlled access on Route 1. The Major Collector streets both collect traffic from local streets and move traffic from one destination to another by connection with Arterial Streets. The Collector Streets serve more of a local function by connecting local streets with Major Collectors and Other Arterials.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR CONNECTICUT: 1998-2003

Chapter 126, Section 8-23, of the Connecticut General Statutes sets the standards for municipal Plans of Conservation and Development. One provision is that municipalities take into account the State Plan of Conservation and Development and note any inconsistencies. The following map illustrates the Land Classifications for Milford according to the Conservation and Development Policies Plan for Connecticut: 1998-2003. The majority of the City is classified as Neighborhood Conservation Area.

According to the Plan:

- **Neighborhood Conservation Areas** are significantly built-up and well populated. These areas generally reflect stable, developed neighborhoods and communities and are often contiguous to Regional Centers.
- **Growth Areas** are lands near Regional Centers or Neighborhood Conservation Areas that provide the opportunity for staged urban expansion generally in conformance with municipal or regional development plans. These lands represent moderately developed areas with vacant, developable lands, existing or planned water or sewer services, and the potential for future mixed use and intensive development of areawide significance.
- **Existing Preserved Open Space** represent areas in the state with the highest priority for conservation and permanent open space.
- **Preservation Areas** are lands that do not reflect the level of permanence of Existing Preserved Open Space but which nevertheless represent significant resources that should be effectively managed in order to preserve the State's unique heritage.
- **Conservation Areas** represent a significant area of the state and a myriad of land resources. Proper management of Conservation Area lands provide for the state's future need for food, fiber, water and other resources.

The Land Use Plan for the City is consistent with the State Plan.



From the "Connecticut Conservation and Development Policies Plan: 1998-2003"

LEGEND:

	Neighborhood Conservation Areas
	Growth Areas
	Existing Preserved Open Space
	Preservation Areas
	Conservation Areas

RELATIONSHIP TO THE REGIONAL PLAN OF DEVELOPMENT

The City of Milford's Land Use Plan as presented in this Plan of Conservation and Development is consistent with the proposals and plans set forth as part of the South Central Regional Council of Government's Regional Plan of Development "Vision for the Future". The Regional Council of Governments set-forth several "opportunities" as Plan goals and guidelines for Milford. These included:

- Enhance the commercial environment and improve storefronts and streetscape in Devon Center.
- Create a unique commercial character in Walnut Beach.
- Continue improvement program in Milford Harbor/Downtown opening the waterfront to public use and tying the downtown to the harbor.
- Review Downtown development goals and design guidelines.
- Add Milford Railroad Station public parking to meet current needs and complement a downtown enhancement program.
- Complete improvements at Silver Sands State Park.
- Encourage improved design, higher density and residential development along the US Route 1 corridor west of Cherry Street.
- Infill/extend office park development at the Wilbur Cross Parkway and Wheelers Farms Road.

All of these issues and goals have been addressed by the City in its Plan of Conservation and Development update either directly or indirectly through the development of local goals and policies. Specifically, the Devon Center and Walnut Beach Area policies and plans have been incorporated into Commercial Corridor Design Districts which address future land usage, streetscape improvements, and access management. The Milford Center Plan component guides future activity in Milford Center which includes the downtown commercial area, the harbor area, the train station, the government center and associated residential and commercial development. The creation of a Milford Center Design Development District

addresses the need for Design Guidelines and the enhancement of community character. The implementation of the land use, parking, signage and traffic circulation policies presented in the Milford Center Plan are key. The Open Space and Housing and Neighborhood Preservation components of the Plan, combined with the Commercial Corridor, Milford Center and Land Use Plan components provide the balance between preservation and conservation and future development. As a mature community in terms of development, much of the City's future growth and change will be the result of in-fill development, redevelopment and the managed development of its remaining vacant parcels. Improving upon existing development, completing improvement and revitalization plans proposed throughout the City and implementing the conservation and development policies and recommendations set forth in this Plan of Conservation and Development will be key to the achievement of a vibrant and balanced community.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE COASTAL AREA MANAGEMENT PROGRAM (CAM)

Milford has an approved Coastal Area Management (CAM) Program which is in accordance with the provisions of the Connecticut Coastal Management Act (P.A.-79-535). This program establishes coastal policies and procedures for the review of activities within the Coastal Area. This update of the Milford Plan of Conservation and Development recognizes these policies throughout the document. The protection of coastal resources is a primary policy of the Open Space Component. This includes the coastal area as well as streams, rivers and watersheds which contribute to the coastal area and Long Island Sound. The Housing and Neighborhood Preservation Component addresses the issue of development within the coastal area particularly the issue of in-fill development within shoreline areas. The Milford Center Component recognizes the importance of Milford Harbor, its surrounding development area and the linkages both physically and visually to the Center. The Wepawaug River, which culminates in the Milford Harbor, is an important link and natural open space feature in the Center. The Land Use Plan recognizes the importance of coastal resources in several ways. The boundary of the Coastal Area Management Zone is clearly delineated on the Land Use Plan. A land use designation of Shoreline Residential has been added to address the issue of in-fill development in this area. Conservation Corridors overlay many of the rivers which feed Long Island Sound and several areas have been designated as Desirable Open Space areas to be added to Existing Open Space areas within the Coastal Area Management Zone.

7. ACTION AGENDA

In order to implement the various recommendations contained in this Plan of Conservation and Development, the following action agenda is proposed. This agenda identifies the action and the organizations proposed to be involved in implementation.

ACTION ITEM	INVOLVED ORGANIZATIONS
1. Revise open space definitions in zoning and subdivision regulations to accurately reflect concepts in open space planning.	Planning and Zoning Board
2. Preserve open space areas within priority regions using various methods described in the plan.	Mayor's Open Space Advisory Committee, Conservation Commission, Milford Land Trust, Planning and Zoning Board, Board of Aldermen
3. Create an Open Space Inventory that includes both public and privately held open space. The inventory should include dedication or tenure status, any restrictions on use, acreage and unique natural or physical features.	Mayor's Open Space Advisory Committee, Conservation Commission, Milford Land Trust, Planning and Zoning Board, Board of Aldermen
4. Create a Natural Resources Inventory that includes a comprehensive listing of notable natural resources in the City.	Mayor's Open Space Advisory Committee, Conservation Commission, Milford Land Trust, Planning and Zoning Board, Board of Aldermen, Milford Tree Commission, Milford Trees
5. Review and revise zoning regulations to establish tree protection/preservation as part of development requirements.	Planning and Zoning Board, Mayor's Open Space Advisory Committee, Conservation Commission, Milford Tree Commission, Milford Trees
6. Identify degraded habitats throughout Milford and establish a restoration plan that places high priority on habitats that protect both inland and coastal resources.	Department of Environmental Protection, Mayor's Open Space Advisory Committee, Conservation Commission, Milford Land Trust, Planning and Zoning Board, Board of Aldermen
7. Develop an inventory of current public access sites and future public access opportunities to help guide future waterfront development and open space planning.	Planning and Zoning Board, Mayor's Open Space Advisory Committee, Parks, Beaches and Recreation Commission, Conservation Commission, Milford Land Trust, Planning and Zoning Board, Board of Aldermen
8. Designate 100' buffer on rivers and streams to bring Milford's Inland Wetlands requirements into compliance with the CT DEP recommendations.	Planning and Zoning Board, Inland Wetlands, City Engineer

9. To fully protect tidal wetlands, incorporate Tidal Wetland Regulations in zoning regulations. Zoning regulations should be amended to include a tidal wetland setback. An effective tidal wetland setback should apply not only to buildings, but to accessory structures and parking areas as well.	Planning and Zoning Board
10. Identify Aquifer Areas and adopt regulations to protect them.	Planning and Zoning Board; Conservation Commission; Mayor's Open Space Advisory Committee; CT Department of Environmental Protection
11. Implement a Conservation Corridor Area review process in which site plan review includes focus on the protection of natural resource areas of critical concern and connections between existing open space areas.	Planning and Zoning Board; Conservation Commission; Inland Wetlands Commission; Parks, Beaches and Recreation Commission
12. Prepare a detailed inventory and analysis of each watershed in Milford. Base the report on an investigation of local geology, soils, climate, flood problems, drainage systems and land use. The primary goal of the inventory is to provide guidance on how to reduce the impact of development on natural and man-made drainage systems. Establish overall standards for impervious cover for each watershed in the City.	Planning and Zoning Board; Conservation Commission; Inland Wetlands Commission; City Engineer
13. Create a Stormwater Management ordinance to be applied to all significant development (to be determined by zoning). The ordinance should address both water quantity and water quality issues. It could also include resource buffers and setbacks, parking lot standards, retention requirements, maintenance, and source control.	Planning and Zoning Board; Conservation Commission; Inland Wetlands Commission; City Engineer
14. Review and revise Zoning to meet future requirements of Phase II of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) storm water program to be implemented in Connecticut in Early 2003. Under this program, the city will be responsible for issuing stormwater discharge permits for construction sites that disturb between 1 and 5 acres of land. To address this program locally the city should develop a stormwater ordinance that establishes many of the same standards and requirements as will be included in the Phase II stormwater permit.	Planning and Zoning Board; Conservation Commission; Inland Wetlands Commission; City Engineer, Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection

15. Revise site development regulations to increase landscaping and decrease amount of impervious surfaces.	City Engineer, Inland Wetlands Commission, Tree Warden, Conservation Commission, Planning and Zoning Board
16. Determine specific needs for playing fields and other active recreation facilities.	Parks, Beaches and Recreation Commission, neighborhood associations, Planning and Zoning Board
17. Designate bicycle/pedestrian linkages.	Parks, Beaches and Recreation Commission, Department of Public Works, Planning and Zoning Board, Police Commission
18. Develop and implement a signage program to mark public open space and public access locations.	Parks, Beaches and Recreation Commission, Department of Public Works, Planning and Zoning Board, Milford Land Trust
19. Expand open space/natural resource education programs.	Board of Education, Conservation Commission, Land Trust, Environmentally Concerned Citizens (ECC), interested citizens
20. Identify, designate and preserve significant historic and archaeological sites worthy of preservation.	Historic Commission, City Historian, Planning and Zoning Board, Board of Aldermen, Conservation Commission
21. Adopt new regulations for review of in-fill development.	Planning and Zoning Board
22. Review and revise Zoning and Subdivision Regulations to incorporate Conservation Design Principles in all future development.	Planning and Zoning Board
23. Designate land on and around Cascade Boulevard as a residential design district to ensure development which incorporates conservation design principles and to allow for careful review and control of site layout.	Planning and Zoning Board
24. Designate Downtown Design Development District Area and adopt regulations.	Planning and Zoning Board, Milford Progress Inc.
25. Study potential Village District/Historic District areas for possible designation.	Planning and Zoning Board, Milford Progress Inc.
26. Adopt regulations to permit multi-family and mixed-use development in the Downtown, neighborhood commercial centers and major commercial corridors.	Planning and Zoning Board, Sewer Commission
27. Revise Subdivision Regulations to incorporate conservation design principles and design standards which protect and enhance community character	Planning and Zoning Board

28. Review and revise Subdivision Regulations to allow for more creative site layout and the promotion of visually appealing subdivision design.	Planning and Zoning Board
29. Review and revise Zoning Regulations to simplify the number of existing zoning designations and reflect existing and future uses. Revised zoning should focus more on performance based zoning as opposed to use based.	Planning and Zoning Board
30. Review and revise Zoning Regulations to incorporate design standards and overall design control guidelines. Ensure in-fill development is in keeping with its surroundings and sensitive to environmental constraints and infrastructure capacity.	Planning and Zoning Board
31. Incorporate traffic management, parking configuration standards and site access control guidelines into Commercial Corridor District zoning.	Planning and Zoning Board, Police Commission
32. Increase the depth of the commercial zone in key areas along Bridgeport Avenue in Devon Center to allow for off-street parking and in-fill development in keeping with current construction trends.	Planning and Zoning Board
33. Encourage limited in-fill residential development in Devon Center in edge areas and on-sites capable of accommodating multi-family development.	Planning and Zoning Board
34. Implement Streetscape Improvement Plan developed for Devon Center.	Department of Public Works, Connecticut Department of Transportation, Planning and Zoning Board
35. Encourage commercial nodes at key locations along Naugatuck Avenue and in-fill residential development, consistent with surrounding densities, as unused and underutilized sites are developed or reconfigured.	Planning and Zoning Board
36. Review and redefine land usage in the Walnut Beach Redevelopment Area. The shopping center developed as part of the overall redevelopment plan is underutilized and calls for increased usage and improvement. Consider re-use of the site to accommodate multi-family housing within a mixed-use development.	Planning and Zoning Board, Economic and Industrial Development Commission, Department of Economic and Community Development, Walnut Beach Association

37. Create a specialty destination shopping environment in the Naugatuck Avenue/Walnut Beach area which capitalizes on its unique location.	Planning and Zoning Board, Economic and Industrial Development Commission, Department of Economic and Community Development, Walnut Beach Association
38. Develop access management plans for the City's Commercial Corridors to address traffic and vehicular movement.	State Department of Transportation, Police Commission, Department of Public Works, Planning and Zoning Board
39. Revise Zoning Regulations to allow multi-family housing by Special Permit within specific Corridor Design Districts and Milford Center Design Development District with a provision for affordable housing in accordance with Section 8-30g of the Connecticut General Statutes.	Planning and Zoning Board
40. Develop and implement "Gateway Improvement" program for entryways into the City and Milford Center.	Planning and Zoning Board, Department of Public Works, Proposed Special Services District, MPI, Inc.
41. Include traffic impact studies as part of the development review process for projects which exceed thresholds to be established in the Zoning Regulations.	Planning and Zoning Board, Police Commission, Engineering Department, Connecticut Department of Transportation
42. Include Fiscal Impact studies as part of the development review process for projects seeking a zoning change.	Planning and Zoning Board
43. Require applicants of residential, commercial and industrial developments of a certain size to reimburse the City for the cost of retaining experts to study, evaluate and comment on reports and studies submitted by the applicant's experts. Development thresholds to be established in the Zoning Regulations.	Planning and Zoning Board
44. Centralize management of various resources and programs in Milford Center	Proposed Special Services District, City of Milford, MPI, Inc.
45. Increase the availability of parking in Milford Center through re-configuration of existing facilities and management of facilities for off-peak use as part of a shared parking approach.	Proposed Parking Authority and/or Special Services District, Police Commission, City of Milford
46. Investigate the feasibility of construction of a parking garage north of the railroad tracks and west of High Street.	City of Milford, Transit District, Proposed Parking Authority and/or Special Services District, Police Commission, Connecticut Department of Transportation

47. Investigate potential for a second train station in Devon.	City of Milford, Connecticut Department of Transportation, Milford Transit District, Police Commission, Planning and Zoning Board, associated neighborhood groups
48. Investigate potential for the installation of sound barriers along the interstate highway to protect adjacent neighborhoods.	City of Milford, Connecticut Department of Transportation, Police Commission, Planning and Zoning Board, associated neighborhood groups
49. Design and implement a signage program in Milford Center and at entrance points.	Department of Public Works, Police Commission, Planning and Zoning Board, Proposed Special Services District, MPI, Inc.
50. Design and implement signage program to indicate key locations and neighborhoods within the City such as the Devon and Woodmont business centers	City of Milford, Connecticut Department of Transportation, Police Commission, Planning and Zoning Board, associated neighborhood groups
51. Improve signalization and undertake modest intersection geometric improvements on North and South Broad Streets and New Haven Avenue. Make High Street a two-way street as it crosses the Green.	Police Commission, Department of Public Works, Connecticut Department of Transportation
52. Improve pedestrian linkages within Milford Center. Promote the installation of signage and signalization to increase pedestrian safety.	Police Commission, Department of Public Works, Connecticut Department of Transportation, Planning and Zoning Board, Proposed Special Services District
53. Improve signage at major intersections to incorporate street names at an elevated location next to traffic signals.	Police Commission, Department of Public Works, Connecticut Department of Transportation
54. Adopt a Milford Center Design District for the portion of Milford Center which is the traditional Downtown.	Planning and Zoning Board
55. Review and consider for adoption, recommendations from the Milford Downtown Plan prepared by MPI, Inc.	Planning and Zoning Board
56. Revise Zoning Regulations to incorporate regulations necessary to implement the Land Use Plan.	Planning and Zoning Board